

# Hermitage Park Helensburgh



## Management and Maintenance Plan

2020 to 2030

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July 2015

# Hermitage Park Management Plan

2020 to 2030

## Adoption of the plan

This plan was adopted by Argyll and Bute Council's Amenity Service in August 2015. In doing so, the Amenity Service is committed to not only maintain standards of maintenance and management in Hermitage Park but to also improve them over the life of the plan.

Signed: Date:

**Name and Title:**

Signed: Date:

**Name and Title:**



July 2015



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**Hermitage Park Proposed Masterplan**



July 2015

## 1. Summary



**Figure 1: Hermitage Park Birds Eye View**

Hermitage Park is an urban park in Argyll and Bute, the only remaining urban park in the local authority area. It covers an area of approximately 3.8 hectares (9.39 acres) and is located in the Conservation Area in the town of Helensburgh on the River Clyde, 200 metres from the town centre and 400m from its esplanade.

The Park contains significant heritage features, gardens and recreational space which require investment to restore the heritage, undertake repairs, reconfigure the recreational space and incorporate interpretation elements to broaden awareness of the park's history, with the principle aim of raising awareness of the rich history of the park by increasing visitor numbers.

Hermitage Park is a place of great significance in the history of Helensburgh, having a key position within its 19th century planned layout when it was a private landscape garden and as a public park for over 100 years, with features of importance from both periods of its development. The Park was founded in 1911 and has outstanding heritage including the remains of Milliggs Mill, which dates back to the 13th century, an 'A' Listed war memorial, together with reflective pool and memorial gardens, designed by the renowned architect A. N. Paterson, a history of high standards of horticulture and association with notable gardeners, botanists and horticulturalists, who have left a good collection of plants and associated features.

The park is managed by Argyll and Bute Council and has been a public park for 104 years. Whilst Hermitage Park has a great deal of character and is a distinctive public park, the decline in condition and low levels of use means that the park requires a comprehensive approach to renewal.

Argyll and Bute Council believes that the Hermitage Park project will allow the Council to work with the community and special interest groups to reinvigorate the park and ensure that it continues to be a space that is at the heart of the community providing a space for heritage, leisure, learning and activities to both its existing users and to a wider audience.

This management plan brings together the management, maintenance and development of Hermitage Park into an overall framework. It is intended to be both a working document and a reference document. As such it contains actions and timetables but also refers to other sources of more detailed information. The Hermitage Park Conservation Management Plan 2015 is the foundation document from which this management and maintenance plan derives but it should also be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- Hermitage Park Activity Plan 2015
- Hermitage Park Pavilion Marketing Plan 2015
- Hermitage Park Interpretation Strategy 2015
- Hermitage Park War Memorial Conservation Plan
- Hermitage Park Cost Plan 2015

The Activity Plan provides further detail on the range of activities proposed to develop Hermitage Park as a major focus for community activity, training and learning and as a place to participate in a range of volunteering opportunities and to further promote Hermitage Park as a major attraction within Helensburgh.

The Conservation Management Plan details how the Council and others will maintain and conserve the important heritage of the park for future generations.

At the time of producing the management and maintenance plan, Argyll and Bute Council is preparing a second round application to the Heritage Lottery Fund 'Parks for People' programme, due for submission on the 31<sup>st</sup> August 2015.

### **Summary Information**

Park Name: Hermitage Park

Location: Sinclair Street, Helensburgh G84 8TX

Ownership: Argyll and Bute Council

Classification: Urban Park

Park Staff: Currently there are no park staff dedicated to Hermitage Park but there is an Amenity Supervisor who manages a maintenance squad who are responsible for maintenance actions within the park

Plan Written By: Gillespies LLP and Argyll and Bute Council





## 2. Introduction



Figure 2: Hermitage Park Logo and strap-line

### 2.1 Vision, Aims and Objectives

This Management and Maintenance Plan (MMP) has been prepared to address and develop the revitalisation of Hermitage Park. It has been developed from a number of key documents including the Hermitage Park Conservation Management Plan, which provided a foundation and detailed information on the heritage and natural significance; and which fed the development of the park Masterplan. Following the development of the Masterplan the Activity Plan, Transport and Access Plan, Pavilion Design Plan and Pavilion Business Plan have also been developed. In addition a park Marketing Plan and Interpretation strategy were completed. The MMP draws from each of these documents to set out a cohesive and sustainable long term vision and detailed way forward. All these documents, together with other supporting information, are required for the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) Parks for People Stage 2 application.

The **vision** is that through 'growing our park together' Hermitage Park will become a welcoming, safe and accessible high quality recreational facility, principally for the local community to enjoy a wide variety of outdoor activities, learn and develop skills or simply relaxing, and become a destination for visitors to Helensburgh, building on the rich heritage and horticultural history of the park.

The **aim** is to attract more visitors, both local and from further afield, to learn about the parks history through projects that will interpret the heritage of the park and encourage more local people to take part in its ongoing development and maintenance. As stated in the CMP it is based on the following three main principles:

- Conserve and restore the historic design and fabric
- Increase potential for community involvement, use and benefit
- Maintain or raise standards of care and maintenance

To achieve this vision of Hermitage Park, the following **objectives** that tie-in with those of the CMP and Activity Plan, will require to be undertaken:

- Manage the balance of diverse interests within the park to create an amenity that provides everyone with recreational and educational opportunities
- Manage and maintain the heritage resources of the park in accordance with the Conservation Management Plan
- Manage and improve the natural ecological habitats to ensure continuing ecosystems for wildlife
- Maintain and develop park infrastructure
- Encourage community involvement in the management of the park

- Conserve the human and natural heritage of the park
- Promote Hermitage Park as a tourism destination.

## 2.2 Management plan framework

This plan sets out the future management, maintenance and development of Hermitage Park and has been produced by Gillespies LLP on behalf of Argyll and Bute Council to provide not only a long-term vision but also details on both developmental and operational duties required to achieve that vision. The Plan will also examine actions that will be carried out over the next five years, reviewed annually and updated to ensure the efficient and effective management and maintenance of Hermitage Park.

The purpose of the management plan is to aid the efficient and effective management of the park for the enjoyment of all users and for future generations and to achieve the aims and vision for the park. In particular it will help with the following:

- day to day management
- planning improvements
- identifying priorities, resource requirements and allocation
- monitoring and reviewing performance
- marketing the park
- encouraging community involvement

It is the responsibility of Argyll and Bute Council to ensure that the management plan is implemented. The accompanying Action Plan will be updated on an annual basis and the entire MMP reviewed every five years.

## 2.3 Purpose of the Management and Maintenance Plan

This plan's target audience is the local community, stakeholders, elected members and Council officers and its style and content should ensure continuity of purpose and consistency in service delivery. It is intended to be a flexible, working document that will be reviewed and updated annually. Reviews will form part of the Green Flag award process.

The principal aim of this Management and Maintenance Plan therefore is:

- To aid the efficient and effective management, maintenance and development of Hermitage Park

Like any management plan its purpose is to:

- Provide a framework within which all future management is carried out. The Plan enables any person involved to understand how and why decisions are taken and the reasoning behind the policies and proposals for action.

In doing so the Council will:

- Involve all stakeholders, officers and elected members to monitor, review and amend the Plan
- Identify and bid for additional resources where necessary

### 3. Where are we now?



**Figure 3: Plan of Conservation Designations for Helensburgh.**

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#### 3.1 Introduction

This section of the plan sets out where we are today describing the park as it currently exists. The section begins with highlighting the policy context of the park based upon the current and proposed policies within Argyll and Bute Council. Following which is set out a brief overview of the park which includes its history to date, who manages it and how they go about this. It also describes what is known about the current users of the park and its surrounding community.

#### 3.2 Policy Context

Hermitage Park sits within the Helensburgh Conservation Area (designated in 1994). The area covers an extensive part of the town's residential area and includes the park, which itself has an A' Listed War memorial within. Hermitage Park has a key role as a focus for both community outdoor recreational activity, and as an area of important green space, as well as providing an offering for visitors to Helensburgh. The Park makes a significant contribution to the attractive townscape of Helensburgh and plays a strategic role in the regeneration of Helensburgh alongside CHORD developments (programme to assist regeneration and economic development in five of Argyll and Bute's waterfront towns - Campbeltown, Helensburgh, Oban, Rothesay and Dunoon)

Sixteen National Outcomes describe what the Government wants to achieve over the next 10 years. Argyll and Bute's Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement contribute to the delivery of these national outcomes. The Hermitage Park project will meet the following objectives within the Single Outcome Agreement:

- A diverse and thriving economy
- Infrastructure that supports sustainable growth
- Education, skills and training maximises opportunities for all Children and young people have the best possible start through the provision of education and outreach facilities create learning opportunities for children and young people across the whole of Argyll
- People live in safer and stronger communities

The overall vision for the park reflects the Argyll and Bute Development Plan objectives of protecting the quality of our heritage and environment as an asset for sustainable economic growth thereby enabling us to deliver a positive economic impact within our towns and across Argyll. This is captured in the developing Helensburgh Green Network which recognises the ecological and wider importance of Hermitage Park.

The Economic Development Action Plan identifies the importance of investment in the heritage within our key towns to secure economic regeneration. In addition the Helensburgh and Lomond developing Economic Development Plan (EDAP) 2014 specifically identifies Hermitage Park as a focus for investment in relation to the following outcomes:

- A place that offers a **revitalised Helensburgh Town Centre and Waterfront** that takes full advantage of its position as a high quality, short term visitor destination close to the Glasgow conurbation.
- A place of **outstanding natural and built heritage** with enhanced natural assets, better townscape and public realm with new community facilities such as the Helensburgh Pierhead Swimming Pool and Leisure Centre together with a refurbished East Clyde Street Centre.
- A **competitive place better connected to the global economy** with thriving local communities that provide an incentive for businesses to locate to, particularly within the context of the Maritime Change Programme and its role in tourism both relating to the adjoining Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park and as a day tripper destination.
- A **greener place** with numerous community led smaller scale renewable energy projects, established community forests and green networks.

The recently published Historic Environment Strategy (2015), which is subject to public consultation, sites the benefits of heritage assets such as Hermitage Park in promoting our historic environment and raising awareness about the positive environmental, social and economic contribution it makes to Argyll & Bute as a place to live, work and visit.

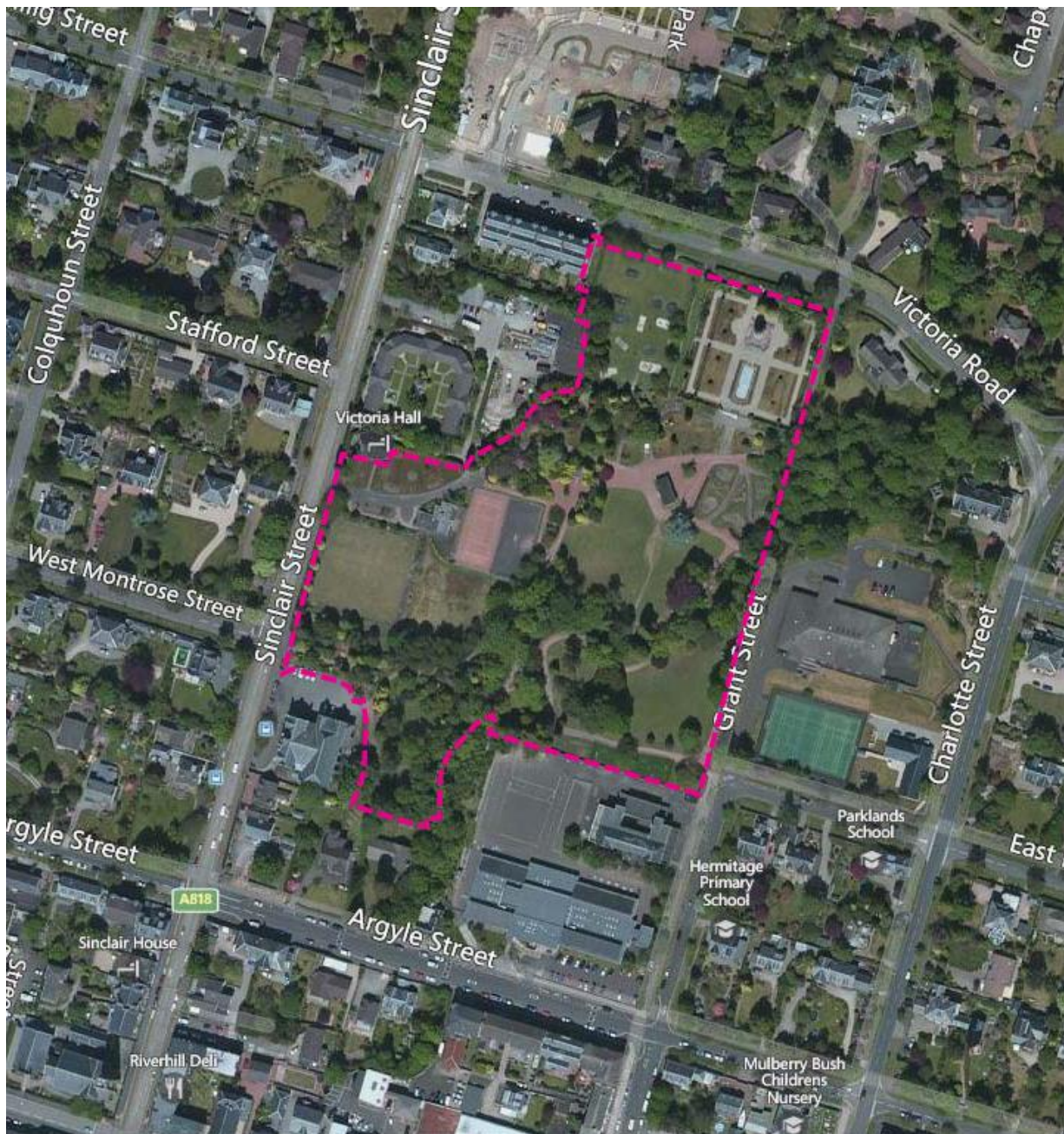
The projects align with the key objectives of the Governments Economic Strategy which has a strong focus on Place and seeks to secure the enhancement of the quality of our area as places to live and work by improving the overall quality of life in our communities. This is dependent upon the quality and accessibility of the facilities and environment - both physical and natural – within our communities such as Helensburgh, which also contributes to our ambitions for a healthier Scotland.

The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 placed a new responsibility on local authorities to prepare core paths plans with the purpose of providing a system of paths sufficient to give the public reasonable access throughout the area. Argyll and Bute Council published its Draft Core Paths Plan in 2010 for consultation.

Argyll and Bute Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) 2010-2015 (currently being revised) sets out the projects which partners will deliver in the Council area over the next 5 years. Divided into 6 Ecosystem Work Programmes, these priority projects have emerged from a long process of consultation, a detailed review of the first Plan and the Scottish Government's more recent biodiversity priorities.

This plan includes a number of actions designed to raise awareness of and increase local biodiversity within the park, these include:

- Mill header pond restoration project -allow natural invertebrates and plants to colonise
- Bird and bat boxes to be placed around the park
- Wetland flush grassland
- Millligns burn bank restoration
- Monitoring fish populations in Millligns burn
- Invasive non-native species eradication
- Annual wildlife survey, to include birdwatching



**Figure 4: Existing park area and location**

### 3.3 Site Description

Hermitage Park is an urban public park in Helensburgh, Argyll and Bute covering an area of approximately 3.83 hectares (9.39 acres), located close to the centre of the town. It is in the Upper Helensburgh Conservation Area only 350m from Helensburgh Central Station and 500m from Helensburgh Upper train station. It is situated within the grid of local tree-lined streets on south facing slopes that characterises the area. The site falls at a fairly even gradient of 1 in 16-18m from north to south except for at the valley of the Milligs burn cutting across the south-east of the park, which is 4m to 6m deep and in places gorge-like in character.

The park is irregular in shape bounded to the north by Victoria Road, with the area to the north-west occupied by the former Council maintenance yard, sheltered housing (Birch cottages) and Albert Terrace. Adjoining the straight east boundary are private houses, woodland associated with the

Milligs burn and Parklands school. Hermitage Primary School bounds a large part of the south boundary, together with some large houses and gardens. To the south-west side are the Victoria Halls and its car park.

Although small the park contains a range of areas of different character and significant heritage features, including the town's war memorial within a walled garden. It includes both the sites of the former Hermitage House and grounds, and Milligs Mill with Milligs burn providing the main topographic feature of the site. Facilities include a large play area, a bowling green, a putting green and former tennis courts.

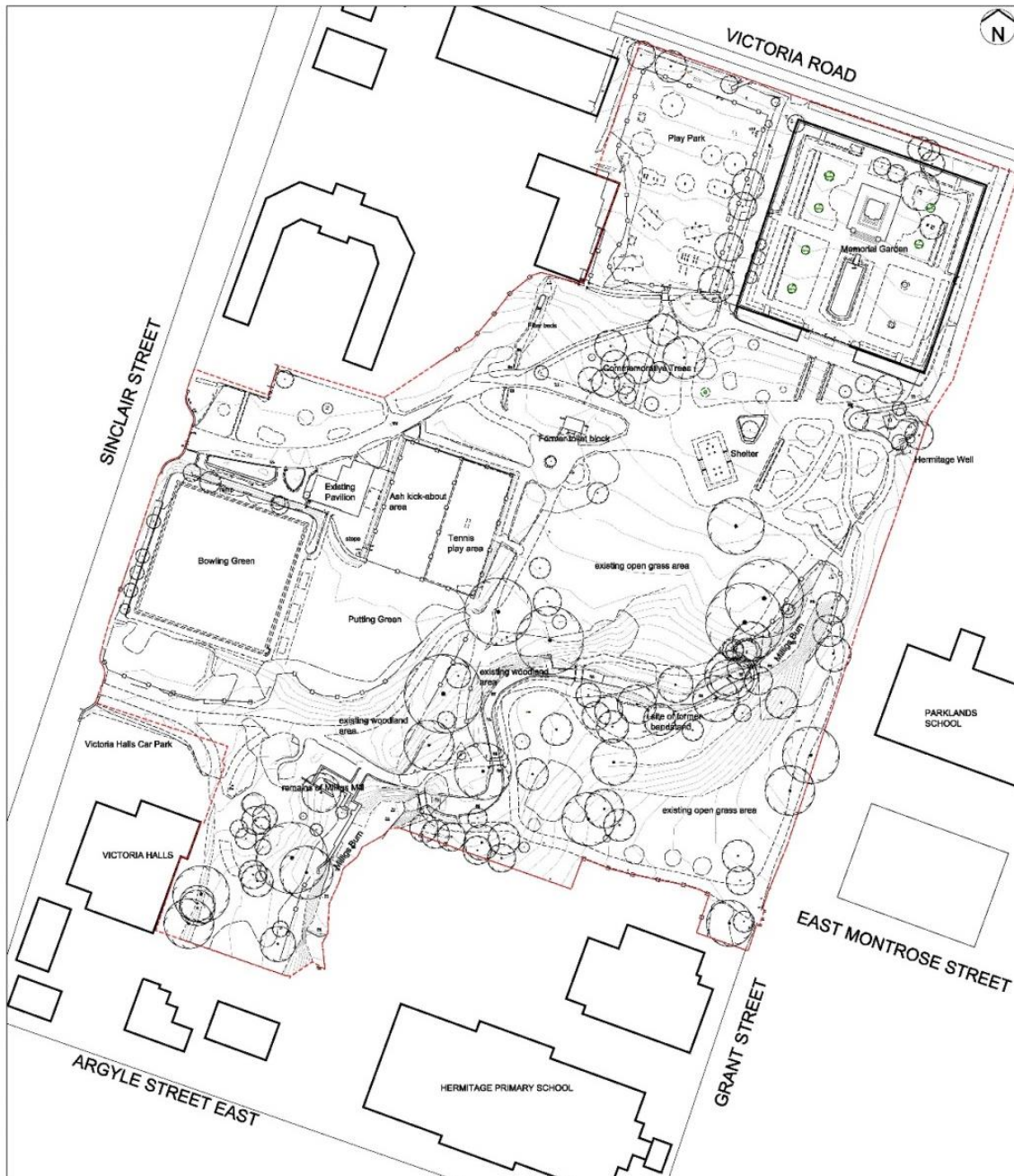


Figure 5: Existing Park Plan

### 3.4 Historical background

The history of the site is exceptionally well documented. In summary, historical records date back to the 13th Century with mention of Milligs Mill that was situated within the south west part of what is now the current park and included not only the mill itself but also the mill lade and mill pond.

In 1732 an extensive area around the current park was planned as an estate landscape by Sir John Shaw, to a plan by William Boutcher, which was thought to later influence the layout of Helensburgh in the 1770s when founded by Sir James Colquhoun of Luss. The park, itself, occupies several grid squares of the town plan, occupying one of the larger plots and one of few that have not been subsequently build upon.

Hermitage House appears to have been built in the 1830s and was the home of the Alexander family and later the Cramb family, who ran a *photographic artists* business. Records of the house and garden appear on the first detailed Ordnance Survey map of the area of 1865, with the mill and mill dam occupying the south-west part of the present park area. Hermitage House was set within what was a pleasure garden with a large expanse of lawn to its front, extensive gardens, a working kitchen garden (now the war memorial) and a fine collection of plants together with a grand drive that swept past the mill pond.

In 1911, Helensburgh Town Council bought the site following the death of Miss Cramb to create a public park from the grounds and work included rose and rock gardens, new paths, a swing park, a rustic bandstand and hermit's well, a grotto like feature. However, the First World War interrupted development of the park. The house was used as a Red Cross auxiliary hospital during the war to house the war wounded, but work continued after the war. Milligs mill was demolished in 1922 and the areas of the mill and dam were added to the park. Tennis courts and a putting green were laid on the site of the mill dam, followed later by a bowling green and a number of paths through the park were edged with stone from the mill. The first phase of the park was completed by 1926.-The walled garden to the north of the house was laid out as a Garden of Remembrance containing the town's war memorial. A local Architect, Alexander Nesbit Patterson designed the now A' Listed war memorial, which was opened with great ceremonial pomp in 1923.

In 1963, the house and original lodge house were demolished. The lodge was replaced by a modern house, which was built to house the park superintendent. A variety of additional structures were added through the 1960's and 1970's including the Japanese style shelter, on part of the site of the now demolished Hermitage House, a toilet block, sports pavilion and a range of structures (bothy, office, machinery shed, etc.) erected along the outer western side of the walled garden.

The upper former North East field, which was part of the original plot, saw the addition of Albert Terrace, a tall block of flats added by 1880. This area, which is no longer part of the park with the exception of the play park, has seen a number of uses including allotments, which is now sheltered housing, and part of what was a commercial nursery now acts as the Amenity Section depot site (serving Helensburgh and District).

#### 3.4.1 More recent developments

Since the 1980's there has been little in the way of any major structural change to the landscape of the park, however, the Superintendent's house has been sold to the last post holder, various commemorative items were added to celebrate local people, which have subsequent been moved elsewhere within Helensburgh (John Logie Baird memorial and the Comet flywheel and anvil, linked to Henry Bell and the blacksmiths that made the steam boat the Comet, the 1st commercial steamboat in Europe).

A local group of parents (Helensburgh Play Park Association) got together in 2014 to raise funds to improve the play equipment within the children’s play area. The area now includes 11 play items and is now one of the most active areas within the park.

In the autumn of 2010 a group was formed in the town to see what could be done about the worsening state of the park. A programme of monthly ‘Action Days’, which continue to the present day, was started by the Friends of Hermitage Park Association (FoHPA). In 2011 the FoHPA began the process of seeking funding under the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) Parks for People programme with a view to conserving the park.

Argyll and Bute Council, working with the Friends of Hermitage Park, secured a first-round pass for a grant of up to £2,087,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) 2014. A development grant of £169,700 has been awarded to develop a stage two application including a master plan, which will be submitted in August 2015. The project will set out plans to restore and enhance the park for the enjoyment of the local community and visitors.

### 3.5 Designed landscape features

The Hermitage Park Conservation Management Plan drafted in January 2015 sets out in detail the existing landscape features including those that have been lost. The description includes an outline history, current use and condition of each feature. The landscape features are spilt up into the following headings:-

- Archaeological features
- Built features (incl. bridges) including park buildings, walls etc.
- Circulation features (drives, paths and car parks)
- Park facilities
- Planted features
- Water feature

#### 3.5.1 Planting

In 1985 a plant list with associated information on each plant was produced. The list highlights a broad range of plantings throughout the park and includes further detail about each plant. The list has been digitised and is being used to update the current plant collection. The current collection is thought to have over 362 different varieties of trees and shrubs listed, a high number of which are Royal Horticultural Society’s Award of Garden Merit (AGM) plants. The original 1985 list has been digitised and is in the process of being updated.

Plant name	Common Name	Country of Origin	Location	Comments	AGM
<i>Acer cappadocicum</i> ‘Aureum’		Asia Minor	Map_Ref_E_	Bright yellow in autumn	Yes
<i>Prunus avium</i> ‘Flora Plena’	Double flowering cherry	Europe	Map_Ref_E_	Planter by Craig. Cubs & Scots	Yes
<i>Rhododenron</i> ‘Linda’		N. Wales	Map_Ref_U	Raised in Bodnant	
<i>Davidia involucrata</i>	Dove(or) Handkerchief Tree	Japan	Map_Ref_V		

The plant collection has inevitably seen changes over the years, whilst it retains a particularly good collection, because of a lack of thinning/maintenance many plants are in danger of being lost.



A fairly large bedding plant display remains despite a number of beds having been converted into herbaceous borders with varying success.

#### *Woodland and Trees*

The park contains a good collection of deciduous and coniferous trees, mostly non-native with a high level of conifers planted throughout. To the north eastern boundary (part of Parklands School) a strip of 'naturalised' woodland follows the line of the burn, this line of trees continues along the side of the burn and through the park, providing an important wildlife corridor through the woodland and into and through the park. A Tree Survey was undertaken in 2015 which identified and surveyed 104 individual trees; the survey doesn't record groups of trees. The condition of the majority of the trees is considered good to fair with only 4 being considered poor. The park has a good age range of trees but would benefit from a new generation being planted.

There is a great deal of horticultural interest within the park, particularly with respect to the Commemorative tree collection, which includes many different species giving rise to a broad range of shapes, leaf and bark textures and colour. Examples include: *Liriodendron tulipifera* (Tulip Tree), *Betula jacquemontii* (White-barked Himalayan Birch), *Ulmus glabra* (Wych Elm), *Picea pungens* 'Hoto' (Blue Spruce variety), *Davidia involucrata* (Handkerchief tree)

#### *Shrubs and planted beds*

There is a good collection of shrubs planted in beds along with the trees, along the edge of Milligs burn, within shrub borders and surrounding many of the features. The Japanese Garden retains a good number of oriental species of a good size. Examples of shrubs include: *Eucryphia glutinosa*, *Kolkwitzia amabilis*, *Parrotia persica*, *Arbutus unedo* and *Drimys aromatica*. A number of the larger shrubs are overgrown and smothering the less hardy species.

The formal beds planted with bedding (455m<sup>2</sup> in total) and herbaceous (190 m<sup>2</sup> in total), are some of the most visible and colourful elements of the park. Five beds formerly planted with bedding have been converted to herbaceous plantings. The bedding plants continue to be changed twice a year providing spring and summer schemes.

#### *Invasive and aggressive plants*

The park has a number of invasive/aggressive species, these include two patches of Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*), a single bed of horsetail (*Equisetum arvense*), two older herbaceous beds contain bellbind (*Calystegia sepium*), there are two areas of broadleaf bamboo (*Sasa* sp.) and various plantings of ground elder (*Aegopodium podagraria*). The Japanese knotweed is being treated chemically. Although other invasive species exist most are under control, for example the large group of *Rhododendron ponticum* invading the banking has been cut hard back by the FoHPA and the small pockets of snowberry (*Symphoricarpos alba*) located along parts of the burn are not considered a threat.

#### *Grassland*

Grass makes up nearly 65% of the park's area (24,350m<sup>2</sup>). Most of the grass within the central part of the park is semi-improved acid grassland, including the bowling green (1,378m<sup>2</sup>) and putting green (1,502m<sup>2</sup>), both of which include quantities of moss. Four different grass maintenance regimes are applied. Most of the grass is cut once a week and the cuttings are left in situ; everywhere else the cuttings are removed and sent for composting. The putting and bowling greens are cut twice a week, and the other cut/box areas once a week. Grass cutting is one of the most labour intensive jobs within the park.

### 3.6 Ecology

As part of the HLF Parks for People project development phase an ecological survey was undertaken in November 2014, which describes the various habitat types within the park. This survey, along with data obtained from Argyll and Bute Council Biodiversity Officer, indicates that diversity is low with just 14 different species of fauna, 11 of which are bird species that would normally be expected in a parkland situation, with the remaining three taxonomic groups being bats, dragonflies and brown trout. It is likely that the list of 11 bird species is an underestimate given the diversity of trees and bushes that could provide potential habitat for nesting birds. However, there is scope to broaden the number of species through the inclusion of bird and bat boxes, introduction of more native plant species and increase the range of habitats that would encourage wildlife to visit and stay, for example the inclusion of ponds and marginal areas for invertebrates and insects, changes to the intensive mowing regime in pockets of the park and through providing more nectar rich plantings, would each improve the biodiversity within the park.

### 3.7 Hydrology

The principle water feature within the park is the Milligs burn, which appears to originate from two reservoirs to the north of Helensburgh, and flows to the shore of Gare Loch. Records indicate that brown trout occurs in the burn. The mill lade runs from the north of the site, south of the playground, through the Japanese garden, then underground, to re-emerge as a very small watercourse just metres from its confluence with the Milligs burn. A water quality survey was undertaken in July 2015 which tested the water quality at the two points that the water enters the park. The results (not yet analysed) will form the start of a monitoring process to help improve water quality.

### 3.8 Archaeology

The park has high local archaeological value due to the former house walled garden, which is now the War Memorial and surviving mill remains (mill dam banks, lade bank, culverted channels and overflow channel).

### 3.9 Built Structures and Infrastructure

The park has a number of built structures, for detailed descriptions and conditions of the built structures refer to the Structural Inspection Report (pavilion), the Conservation Management Plan (which lists the condition of all current and lost structures) and the War Memorial. Conservation Plan 2015.

#### *Pavilion*

It is estimated to have been built in the late 1960's to early 1970's, it is single storey and principally flat roofed timber framed structure with an insitu concrete floor slab. It is dilapidated with evidence of water damage and damp. It currently houses part the park tool collection and a number of items of machinery specifically used within the park. There is a further space that is currently leased to a fitness business who as part of the agreement hire out putting clubs and bowls, in summer they have a small sales area selling ice-creams and drinks. The toilets within the pavilion are not open to the general public. The Hermitage Park Bowling club also use a small part of the space for storage.

#### *Japanese Shelter*

Likely to have been constructed in the mid 1960's as the first evidence of its inclusion in the park is on the 1963 OS map. It is a freestanding steel frame structure clad with timber and open on all sides. Water damage is evident with the plywood cladding surrounding the columns swollen in places. It is referred to as the Japanese style shelter as it is supposed to reflect a Japanese design. In 2015 the feature included a free standing wall, which was removed.

### *The War Memorial*

Set within what was formerly the walled kitchen garden of Hermitage House and square in shape. The masonry walls vary between 2m and 3.5m and are generally 500mm thick and extensively covered in ivy. The garden contains a large sandstone war memorial, generally in good condition, on a raised plinth and a rectangular reflecting pond which has been drained down for some time. The main entrance to the garden is via the south wall by means of large decorative steel gates and there are also single leaf gates in the east and west walls.

There are areas of distortion within the north perimeter wall and a number of other defects and sections of stone missing. In addition, the metalwork of the main gate is extensively corroded. The War Memorial is an A' Listed building, the listing, issued by Historic Scotland, includes the perimeter walls, ornamental gates, main memorial and the reflective pool.

### *Toilet Block*

A small, single-storey, flat-roofed building, the toilet block is located within the centre of the park but is no longer in operation.

### *Hermits Well*

A small cubicle housing a water-spout/spring in its back wall. Four steps lead down in to the now flooded chamber. It is recorded as having been built around 1912 to 1914.

### *Remains of Milligs Mill*

The long history of the mill culminates in its demolition in 1962 after the building was declared unsafe. It is not clear how much of the ruined structure that survives contains an actual building but they do contain significant material including mill-stones, three date stones and a Malig Mill stone plaque. However, the remains are seriously encroached by planting, require consolidation and the path through them is impassable for many people due to its poor condition and steep gradient.

### *Park Lodge house*

The park lodge is a single storey property at the main entrance on Sinclair Street. Although the property and access to it is within the park, it is now in private ownership. This is not the original lodge building which is thought to have been demolished at the same time as the house in 1963. The current lodge was constructed in 1964.

### *Entrance Gateways and drives*

The park is accessible via five entrances; 2 from Sinclair Street, which includes the main entrance on the west boundary, 2 from Victoria Road on the north boundary and an entrance from Grant Street / Montrose Street East at the southeast corner and a comprehensive network of footpaths. The park entrances on Sinclair Street and Grant Street are defined by attractive stone walls in relatively good condition.

Vehicular access is limited to council vehicles, the lease holder of the pavilion for access and the police. During events other vehicles are allowed on site. Vehicles can access the site from the main entrance on Sinclair street, a side private road to the north of the pavilion and the entrance on to the east side of Victoria Road.

### *Footbridges*

There are four bridges with a flat deck construction and a concrete-arched bridge within the park. Originally the bridges had timber decks and rustic, but decorative balustrades but these have all been replaced with half round timber post design. A fifth bridge has been buried by years of garden waste.

### *Play Area*

Situated in the north part of the site and east of the War Memorial, the play park (principally for young children) comprises eleven items of modern equipment (replaced in 2014) that were funded by the local community. There is also an old traditional rocking horse which has been retained but it is no longer functioning. This area is a well-used part of the park.

### *Paths*

There is a good path network, but unfortunately the majority of paths are in poor condition due to erosion which makes access extremely difficult for those in wheelchairs and for pushing buggies, cycling and scooters. None of the paths have lighting.

### *Lighting and CCTV*

There is lighting to the side of the pavilion overlooking the former tennis courts but is managed by the fitness business. A single CCTV camera is located to the south east of the pavilion.

## 3.10 Current Issues within Hermitage Park

The heritage of the park has, over time, diminished due to amongst other things, a lack of cyclical maintenance, poor path surfaces and drainage issues, not addressing health and safety issues, a lack of any sense of arrival in the park and lack of a clear management plan.

In an attempt to reduce anti-social behaviour around the shelter the short wall beneath it was removed in early 2015, which has been successful to some degree. There are a number of areas located just outside of the park (woodland next to Parklands School and behind Victoria Hall (south west perimeter) where anti-social behaviour results in a high level of litter and broken glass being brought into the park.

The following list is a summary of the key management and maintenance issues the council wishes to address:-

- The current park pavilion is rented out, with part given over to the park's maintenance store, and is used by a local fitness group and the bowling club, but otherwise is rarely open.
- The toilet block is a separate building but is closed, therefore the park has no public conveniences.
- The park also includes a number of recreation facilities; bowling green, putting green, tennis courts and children's' play area, but for a young age group only. However, other than the play area the features are little used due to their poor condition.
- The park profile is suffering due to lack of visibility. Poor signage and the walls and hedges preclude views in to the park. The absence of lighting deters use in the late evenings and the winter months.
- A number of large coniferous trees are creating dark, damp areas and overshadowing more attractive deciduous trees.
- The pavilion, shelter and toilet blocks are all in poor condition as is the path network which particularly impedes the ability of wheelchair users, buggies and bikes and there is insufficient seating and shelter.
- There is no dedicated parking for users of the park with visitors either parking on the surrounding streets or within the Victoria Halls car park, both options giving rise to problems to local residents and users of the Hall.
- The key heritage aspects of the park are lost in undergrowth and/or not interpreted.

### 3.11 Community context

This section of the plan looks at what is known about the community surrounding Hermitage Park from demographics and from a number of consultation exercises. It also considers current use and users of the park. Further detail is available within the Activity Plan.

#### 3.11.1 Surrounding community

Helensburgh is the largest town in Argyll and Bute with a population of 14,020. It has both affluent housing in the 'Upper Helensburgh' Conservation Area (the area in which Hermitage Park is situated) and also two of the most 15% overall deprived areas in Scotland, one of which is the most deprived areas in Argyll and Bute. Both these areas lie to the east of Hermitage Park, within a 10 minute walk and the majority of the dwellings are flats.

In addition, the (data zone) immediately south of Hermitage Park has over 90% of dwellings as flats.

Two schools neighbour the park and at least three others are within easy walking distance and Cardross Primary School have easy access to Helensburgh via rail links.

The large armed forces community too are within walking distance to the park but are discouraged from coming due to a lack of toilets and other facilities.

In its heyday, during the early and mid-parts of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the park augmented the colourful private villa gardens and tree-lined streets, contributing greatly to Helensburgh's unique local landscape.

The park, during this time, was a beautifully cultivated public garden for local residents and visitors mainly arriving from Glasgow on commercial steamships. Although the park is still considered to be an important recreation asset the level of usage has declined steadily over the last 30 years and is now principally used only by local residents of Helensburgh.

However, despite this Hermitage Park (as part of a local open space, with public access) is particularly important in terms of quality of life, health and wellbeing.

#### 3.11.2 Current users

Hermitage Park, as mentioned above, is now almost entirely used by local residents. The data collected during community consultation exercises and recorded within the Activity Plan estimates that up to about 500 people use the park on a fine day in the summer but the majority are local people.

The Friends of Hermitage Park (FoHPA) undertook a follow up survey in 2014 adding further to our knowledge of the park and how people use and perceive it. The results can be found within the Activity Plan.

Funded by the HLF Development phase four sets of pedestrian monitors have been purchased and fitted to the four main access points into the park. The data collected will be essential in adding to the baseline data and later evaluation process.

The bowling green is rarely used at all, due to the small membership of the club and poor state of the greens. The tennis courts are unusable, but recent improvements to the play area have brought it back into use by families with young children. There is a popular "boot camp" keep fit programme, which is run in the park on a commercial basis by a company called SOS Fitness. The park is also very

well used for dog walking during the day but there are problems in the evenings with evidence of antisocial use by teenagers who gather and loiter particularly behind the Victoria Halls.

The reasons for the poor use and perception of the park have been previously outlined but the consultation exercise confirmed that the particular concerns are associated with the lack of physical access and the lack of views and vistas both into and within the park.

However, feedback confirmed the view that the park is valued by the wider community but also that perceptions about vandalism and other kinds of anti-social behaviour prevent community use. There has been frustration and complaints about the memorial garden being locked, overnight and therefore inaccessible, at times, to retired or other military personnel who have wanted to pay their respects. However, the FoHPA worked out a rotor together with the council to ensure the memorial garden is open on a daily basis.

Whilst much of the feedback focuses on the current poor condition of the park, there are a number of individuals, groups and organisations who would be keen to make more use of the park if the basic requirements are addressed: opening up of views, improved footpath surfaces, lighting, seating, sheltered areas, parking, toilets and café facilities.

### **3.11.3 Community Involvement**

In light of the poor park facilities, there has not been any real focus on providing a programme of events and activities which would encourage visitors to the park and expand community use. However, Argyll and Bute Council are aware that a good number of groups are already using the park, these include:-

Hermitage Primary School uses the park on a regular basis to undertake its sports classes. The school neighbours the park and has very little by way of 'green' space on which to exercise. In addition they use the park for their annual sports day event. St. Michael's primary School, Dumbarton use the park annually as a treat at the end of the summer term.

A number of local Church Groups use the park, Bethesda Church organise family fun days out using the bowling and putting green and play areas, and an annual Duck race is organised in the park by a local Christian group.

As part of the project the FoHPA developed a list of over 100 organisations within Helensburgh. All were contacted and invited to join the Users Group. The current Hermitage Park Users Group has 14 regular groups attending monthly meetings, with many people wearing a number of hats and represents a broad range of interest groups in and around Helensburgh.

Previously, other than the annual memorial events and the annual Bicentenary Pipe band Championship, the park is little used for large-scale public activities. However, in 2015 the FoHPA launched what they hope to be an annual event in the park. The event was hailed as a great success by all, including the local paper, Helensburgh Advertiser, which reported the event. The Tea in The Park event saw a great deal of local support for the project, including most of the Hermitage Park Users Group members. In addition, due to good marketing a number of none residents were attracted to the event. The Friends raised over £3,000 with an estimated 1,300 visitors on the day. The annual Bicentenary Pipe Band Championships takes place in the park attracting 2000 spectators, a high proportion of which are from out of town. The event demonstrates that people will attend events despite the lack of facilities and weather.



Figure 6: FoHPA Tea in the Park poster

A local archaeologist has recently led a number of free history and archaeology walks, in the park, on behalf of the Friends group.

The Helensburgh Play Park Association, which was set up to address the problems associated with the lack play facilities raised £40,000 in 2014, for new equipment through an application to the National Lottery and local fundraising. This has seen a significant increase in the use of this part of the park.

SOS Fitness already offers successful fitness activities in the park that include free sessions, and which could be built on with improved facilities. The Councils Active Schools co-ordinator is keen to utilise the park to encourage more use, but the current facilities mean that use is limited. Since SOS Fitness has been located within the park, their presence has reduced anti-social behaviour especially around the pavilion.

Other organisations currently active in the area have also expressed interest in community projects with improved facilities and infrastructure in the park, many of which have joined our Users Group.

**Table 1: Hermitage Park Users Group Members and interest**

Friends of Hermitage Park (chair the meeting)	The group are responsible for where we are today and are keen to conserve and develop the park into a safe amenity to be proud of.
Transition Town Helensburgh	Want to develop a local growing scheme and a vertical orchard and develop an annual event around growing, picking and eating plants. The group undertook the Environmental impact assessment of the park and are keen to promote and improve the parks green credentials and continue to monitor.
Helensburgh Play Park Association	To maintain and continue to develop a safe and fun play area.
Helensburgh Bowling Club	To maintain a high quality area to bowl.
Helensburgh & Gareloch Horticultural Society	Developing a worthy park for Helensburgh with a good level of horticultural interest to help them to inspire the next generations of gardeners.
SoS Fitness	To develop the park and its fitness/activity facilities (utilising natural features) encourage people to be more active and fit.
Helensburgh East Esplanade Protection Group	To conserve and develop the park, with a specific interest in native flora and fauna and the conservation of specific park features.

Helensburgh and Lomond Carers (Young and Mature)	Develop the park as a space for their members to use and enjoy. Particularly interested in developing events and activities relevant to their members.
Argyll Voluntary Action	Encouraging people into the park and provide them with experience and a variety of activities.
Health & Wellbeing Network	Encourage health and wellbeing, they see the park and training possibilities within the garden and pavilion café as a great potential.
Cornerstone	Interest in horticulture and developing a facility to train and encourage their members to get involved in the park. They are particularly interested in the development of the Demonstration Garden.
Men's Shed	Wish to develop a Men's Shed within the park and work in partnership to develop skills sharing and assisting the park with making and maintaining park furniture, etc.
Armed Forces Family Group	The memorial garden through adding further interest. Volunteering in the park and wishing to take part in local activities.
Schools representative	Links with schools to develop the park to be of value to schools through links across the curriculum and through providing suitable facilities for schools to use.
Neighbours	General interest in development proposals.

#### 3.11.4 Consultation

Throughout the development work there has been extensive consultation with stakeholders, members of the Hermitage Park Users Group, local people and people representative of target audience groups. This has been advertised through a range of different mediums to reach as broad a group as possible. Overall people felt that the park is well used by dog walkers, and families using the play area, however they commented that the park is generally not well maintained, the paths are in a poor condition and the park is used in inappropriate ways during the evening.

The consultants met and spoke with a wide and diverse group of people that represent the local area. The Hermitage Park Activity Plan provides further information on these groups and the consultation process, feedback results of surveys carried out and programme of activities.

#### 3.12 Marketing and promotion

The Council website has a dedicated Hermitage Park web page, which sets out the HLF process and information on plans to regenerate Argyll and Bute's only remaining urban park. It sets out the aims of the HLF project: restoring the park's significant heritage, carry out major repair work and reconfigure the recreational space for the benefit of the public.

The Council's Press Officer has set out a communications strategy that identifies key promotional activities, which have resulted in a long list of primarily local articles and interest through the councils Twitter and Facebook pages. The objectives of the communications strategy are:

- To provide regularly updated information on the development phase of the Hermitage Park project to all audiences
- To manage public expectations
- To encourage the public to give their views on the regeneration of the park
- To generate additional interest in the park



To date these objectives have been achieved, primarily through the issuing of press releases at the appropriate project milestones, as well as through a webpage on the council's website, via social media and by way of a regular newsletter.

By issuing a total of eight proactive press releases and responding to one enquiry we have secured 16 positive articles in local media outlets, primarily in the local newspaper, the Helensburgh Advertiser, which has a readership of around 12,000, with a Facebook following of over 3,500. To date they have carried all our updates prominently across their print, online and social media platforms.

A new notice board has been erected within the park, located near the main entrance. The most recent newsletter is displayed, alongside HLF project updates such as the masterplan, and events and activities.

As part of the development phase of works a logo and strap line have been produced to help promote the park. This has been used on three large banners that have been used to promote all the different events. It is also used by the FoHPA and available to other Users Group members.

In addition, the public has been kept aware of the project and the design development through the consultations that have been carried out and particularly those with respect to the Activity Plan through extensive consultation with stakeholders, members of the Hermitage Park User Group, local people and people representative of target audience groups.

The Hermitage Park Officer together with the Helensburgh Stroke Club and Hermitage Academy (local secondary school) are working on developing a video where two generations share their stories and thoughts on the park. This will be used to promote the park.

The Friends of Hermitage Park Association (FoHPA), through fund raising events, have been raising the profile of the park. They have undertaken a series of events and activities, which will continue. This has and is generating a great deal of local support and awareness of the project. Working in partnership with the FoHPA the council's Hermitage Park Development Officer (HLF funded) continues to promote the park through and is working together with the FoHPA and other Users Group members to maintain good communication links and grow support for the Hermitage Park HLF project. The success is evident through the ever growing Users Group, e-mail communication and steady flow of newspaper articles.

### 3.13 Current management and maintenance

The previous section provided an overview of the park, this section explores the current management and maintenance arrangements and includes the recent Environmental Impact Assessment undertaken on the park.

#### 3.13.1 Current management and maintenance arrangements

*Management and Maintenance tasks (cyclical and occasional)*

A Bill of quantities for the park sets a list of tasks undertaken in the park over a full year. The table below provides a list of cyclical tasks (as part of a fortnightly work schedule running from April to October) and lists other occasional tasks undertaken within the park in any given year. The occasional tasks include tasks that cannot be planned (e.g. tree clearance) and that are not part of the fortnightly maintenance scheme.

The Environmental Impact survey provides a more detailed list of activities undertaken within the park, see appendix 4.

*Park expenditure*

In 2013/14 the revenue budget for Hermitage Park was £108,704 this includes staff costs (see staffing below), management charges, all material costs and overheads. The park revenue budget is managed by the Amenity Section. In addition to this the park has access to two further budgets set out below. These budgets facilitate a number of different sites across Argyll and Bute Council and are managed by Property Services department:-

- 1) Central Repairs Account for cemetery's - Memorials maintenance and repair: available for maintenance and repairs to the A' Listed War Memorial within the Park and others (£3,000)
- 2) Central Repairs Account - Buildings maintenance and repair budget available for maintenance and repairs to the pavilion plus other structures (£4,000)

Table 1 below shows expenditure on park infrastructure maintenance and improvements during the past 12 months the figures are based on unit costs and so include staffing, materials and management charge. The budget for 2015 is £100,741

**Table 2: Maintenance tasks and costs**

Task	Visits	Responsibility	Cost
Grassland Maintenance	As part of fortnightly schedule Plus winter works (Oct to March)	Amenity Section Amenity Supervisor	£45,668.78
Tennis Court Maintenance	Undertaken over 8 visits (Oct to March)	Amenity Section Amenity Supervisor	£51.80
Bed Maintenance	As part of fortnightly schedule	Amenity Section Amenity Supervisor	£29,457.93
Pesticide Control	Undertaken over 7 visits	Amenity Section Amenity Supervisor	£816.28
Cleansing	As part of fortnightly schedule (April to October) and (Oct to March)	Amenity Section Amenity Supervisor	£6,515.46
Play ground checks	Weekly throughout the year	Amenity Section Technical Officer	£603.84
Painting and repairs	As and when need and through Oct to March.	Amenity Section Amenity Supervisor	£770.31
Unscheduled works	Undertaken as and when needed (Oct to March)	Amenity Section Amenity Supervisor	£7,799.60
Other		Amenity Section Amenity Supervisor	£9,057.00
<b>Total</b>			<b>£100,741</b>

Staffing



The park is currently managed by an Amenity Supervisor (not horticulturally trained) and their team and advised by a Technical Officer (not hands-on) and an Amenity Performance Manager. As part of a fortnightly maintenance schedule running April to October and covering a number of sites a Gardener/Gravedigger and Gardener undertake an agreed schedule of work within the park. They are assisted by a seasonal gardener (not specific to the park) who is employed April to October. In addition to the other Amenity Section staff (including trained garden staff) assists. From October to March whilst there is no specific maintenance schedule an agreed list of tasks is undertaken with any additional works being undertaken as and when needed (tree works, repairs to fencing, walls, paths, etc.) This work is undertaken by a variety of different Amenity Service staff depending upon their skills.

Argyll and Bute have a modern apprentice scheme; one apprentice is located within the Helensburgh area and linked to the Amenity Section. This post is currently vacant but will in the future be allocated to Hermitage Park.

Previous to this a dedicated team of gardeners worked under a Park Superintendent and Park Supervisor to maintain and develop the park. Helensburgh and Lomond have funding for a single

#### *Training and development*

Each member of staff has annual performance review at which, any training requirements are identified and actions put in place to provide staff with the relevant training and development needed.

#### *Organisational Structure*

The organisational hierarchy of Hermitage Park is shown below. Note, this does not include the proposed HLF funded posts.

#### *Other groups*

In addition to the above the FoHPA work alongside the council to undertake an Activity day. This takes place every month from March to October for a period of roughly two hours. The FoHPA have been carrying out a variety of works on site since 2011 and have continued ever since. In addition, they undertake other duties such as assisting with opening and closing the war memorial garden.

### 3.14 Environmental Management

#### 3.14.1 Sustainable Procurement Strategy

There is no specific environmental management system or statement for Hermitage Park, but there is a general policy that is general to Argyll and Bute Council. There is also a Sustainable Procurement Policy 2012-15 (currently being updated), which provides guidance on the purchase and use of specific products. In particular, it makes reference to building materials, motor vehicles and powered machinery, herbicides, pesticides, wood preservative and peat products. Purchasing is monitored as part of, the tendering process, which requires contractors to submit an environmental statement that forms part of the weighted evaluation criteria.

The Council has a list of preferred Contractors and where possible the Amenity Services use local companies and suppliers, to reduce the environmental impact of transportation and to support local businesses and economic development.

#### 3.14.2 Carbon Management Programme 2009-2014 (currently being updated)

The Carbon Management Programme sets out the processes by which Argyll and Bute Council aims to reduce carbon emissions by 20% over that period.

#### 3.14.3 Environmental Impact of Hermitage Park, Helensburgh 2015

An Environmental and carbon audit of Hermitage Park was completed in July 2015 with the aim of auditing the current maintenance workings of Hermitage Park to assess its impact on the environment, and make recommendations that would reduce the carbon footprint and improve sustainability of the park. The resulting information will be used to guide the management and maintenance plan for the park and support the Heritage Lottery Fund, Parks for People's ten outcomes to reduce the environmental impact of the park.

The proposed recommendations within the document will be used to inform the next part of the Management and Maintenance Plan, to help further reduce the environmental impact of the park. A summary of the assessment is set out below and the full audit can be found in appendix 4. The work was carried out by members of Transition Town Helensburgh (TTH) in partnership with Argyll and Bute Council. TTH hope to continue their work through undertaking annual monitoring of the park based upon the initial survey, share and promote the work undertaking.

The park is carbon negative overall, sequestering around 10 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e per year – this is equivalent to offsetting all the emissions produced by an average Scottish household. Park operations and decomposition processes generate over 12 te CO<sub>2</sub>e in greenhouse gases, but this is more than compensated by the 22 te CO<sub>2</sub>e sequestered in the park's trees and soil. The overall rate of carbon sequestration across the park's 3.8 ha is 0.27 kg CO<sub>2</sub>e/m<sup>2</sup> per year. The highest total emissions are from the annual beds at 3.6 te CO<sub>2</sub>e/year (Figure 9.1), and within this the highest individual contribution is 2.1 te from the peat-based compost transported from Ireland used to fertilise and condition the soil. Although the grassed area is over 35 times as large as that devoted to bedding, grass has slightly lower total emissions. The electricity consumed for lighting and security in the current pavilion is equivalent to that of an average household and adds another 1.5 te CO<sub>2</sub>e/year.

## 3.15 Woodland management

### 3.15.1 Tree works

Argyll and Bute Council do not undertake any formal tree assessments within Hermitage Park, however, general checks are undertaken by Amenity Services. Any tree works required are undertaken by the Amenity Section (ground work only) for any major tree works or removal external contractors are brought in.

### 3.15.2 Tree survey

A tree survey was prepared in June 2015 to gather the latest data on individual trees and groups of trees present on the site and the production of a plan identifying the location and tree quality assessment category, supported by an inventory of trees (i.e. tree schedule) with unique identification number (for individual trees only, not groups), characteristics, condition and an outline of remediation / arboricultural recommendation.

All works were undertaken through application of the standards and methods set out in BS5837:2012 – Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations.

A copy of the Tree Survey is included in Appendix C. This survey will assist in identifying actions required for those trees assessed as part of the survey.

### 3.15.3 Plant survey/records

In February 1985 Dumbarton District Council undertook a report of the plants in Hermitage Park, compiled by Gillian Mitchell. The supporting plan identified various zones within the park and the report indicated the plant species in each area. This report will also be valuable in assisting with future management and maintenance through the identification of valuable and unusual shrub and understorey species. The original plant list has been digitised and the plant collection is in the process of being updated. This will be incorporated with the above tree survey and will together form an essential tool for the recording, monitoring and management of all trees and plant species on the site.

## 4. Where do we want to get to?



*Figure 7: Looking north towards the pavilion with the Bowling Green to the left*

### 4.1 Introduction

This section of the Plan provides an analysis and evaluation of Hermitage Park. Building upon the information contained in Section 3 and the list of sources set out below, the following section utilises the eight Green Flag headings to draw out the main issues that have been identified and provides for each a series of broad recommendations to guide the development of the park. These recommendations are further refined and carried forward into Section 5 – How Will We Get There?

Sources used to arrive at key issues facing Hermitage Park are:

- Section 3 of this plan
- Conservation Management Plan conclusions
- Activity Plan Aims and Objectives
- Business Plan
- Travel Plan
- Green Space Strategy and Audit
- Discussions with key staff
- Consultation with Friends of Hermitage Park Association
- Consultation with local schools and other community groups
- Consultation with Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE)
- Meetings and discussions with others considering different training options, visits to other HLF Parks for People (Levensgrove in Dumbarton and Soughton, Edinburgh)

### 4.2 Green Flag Award scheme

A key requirement of HLF is to attain Green Flag status. The Green Flag Award Scheme is an established national standard for quality in greenspace management in England and Wales. It has been piloted as a scheme for benchmarking the quality of parks and green spaces in Scotland since 2007 by Greenspace Scotland in partnership with The Civic Trust in England.

Following the success of the pilots the Green Flag Award scheme is now available in Scotland administered by a consortium comprising Keep Britain Tidy GreenSpace and the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV).

The following eight Green Flag headings are used to set out the issues facing the park and the recommendations for improvements. The headings are:

1. A Welcoming Place
2. Good and Safe Access
3. Well Maintained and Clean
4. Sustainability
5. Conservation and Heritage
6. Community Involvement
7. Marketing
8. Management

## 4.3 A Welcoming Place

### 4.3.1 Welcoming

A heritage style sign directs people from Helensburgh Central station to Hermitage Park, but only the main Sinclair Street entrance indicates that you are entering the park, with the use of a tired red sign. Generally, the mature vegetation and boundary walls means that unless you know the park is there, it is too easy to pass by without any awareness of the extent of the park.

There are two entrances off Sinclair Street; the main entrance is denoted by low stone walls and piers and wide asphalt boulevard with a utilitarian metal vehicle barrier preventing casual vehicle access. Views into the park are obscured by the park pavilion and overgrown conifers, trees and shrubs beyond. The second entrance is adjacent to the Victoria Halls car park and again defined by low stone walls and piers, but is a pedestrian only entrance.

There are also two entrances from Victoria Road; one leads directly in to the children's play area which then gives access into the park and the second is immediately to the east of the Memorial Garden via a narrow path defined by large hedgerows and mature trees on one side and the ivy clad walls of the Memorial Garden on the other. There are no views into the park from this access and this entrance is particularly unwelcoming as reduced views give a sense of seclusion.

The fifth entrance is on the junction of Grant Street with East Montrose Street and again is defined by low stone walls with piers and hedging. This is also a pedestrian only entrance.

The two entrances off Sinclair Street and the one off Grant Street have metal notices announcing: *Dogs to be kept on lead at all times and any fouling removed to bin.*

Within the park there are no signs or orientation maps or interpretation of any of the park features and elements.

#### Recommendations

- Include signage at all five entrance, including map layout of the park
- Include location maps within the park to improve orientation and direction
- Include interpretation information to improve visitor understanding of the park features and heritage elements
- Improve views into the park through each of the entrance gates by reducing hedge heights, replant poorer plantings, and raise the tree crown heights along the Sinclair Street boundary
- Remove the existing pavilion and poor plantings and out of scale conifers to open up views into the central area of the park

- Provide covered buggy and bike stands near new pavilion.

#### 4.3.2 Accessibility

##### *Parking*

There is no dedicated car park for Hermitage Park. Parking currently occurs either on the surrounding streets or within the existing Victoria Halls car park. On a day to day basis this is currently sufficient, although not ideal, but is certainly not sufficient to meet demand when there are events taking place in the park.

Parklands School, which bounds the Park to the east, has a car park and pick up / drop off facilities which are currently unused during the evening and at weekends.

##### *Rail*

Helensburgh Central is within 350m of the park and Helensburgh Upper within 500m. However, for visitors with disabilities and young children the walk may be challenging and or put off visiting the park as access to or from the park to both stations is via a hill.

##### *Bus*

There are currently three bus services that operate from bus stops on Sinclair Street, approximately 60m from the entrance to Hermitage Park. The nearest two bus stops have public transport information, but neither is provided with a shelter. The southbound bus stop is located directly in front of Victoria Halls, and the northbound bus stop is approximately 25m to the south of the of the Victoria Halls boundary. However, the bus services operate infrequently.

##### *Cycling*

Sinclair Street forms the beginning of the Helensburgh to Arden cycle route which is a predominantly on road route but cycle lanes are provided on both sides of the street in the vicinity of the park. The streets around the park are generally lightly trafficked and are therefore conducive to cycling. However, there are no cycle racks or storage facilities within the park.

##### *Paths*

The footways to the park are asphalt and whilst patched are sound and not too uneven. However, within the park the paths are extremely poor. There is a mix of asphalt, gravel and red blaze surfaces throughout the park but many are suffering from erosion due to poor drainage conditions.

#### Recommendations

- Create dedicated parking facilities with all ability access from the existing Victoria Halls entrance
- Resurface primary paths with suitable surface and edging, including drainage detail to direct excess water off the path surfaces, to improve access for all
- Resurface secondary paths with 'hoggin'-style gravel surface, edging and drainage to improve access for all
- Provide covered cycle rack facilities
- As park usage increases set up dialogue with bus companies to consider improving frequency of bus services

#### 4.3.3 Signage

Other than a single sign at the main entrance on Sinclair Street there is no internal or external directional signage.

#### Recommendations





- Include signage at all five entrance, including map layout of the park
- Include location maps within the park to improve orientation and direction
- Include interpretation information to improve visitor understanding of the park features and heritage elements
- Develop a downloadable digital map highlighting all facilities.

#### 4.3.4 Equal access for all

Limited parking facilities, bus services, poor path surfaces, lack of lighting and lack of toilet facilities (in the park) all discourage visitors from visiting and remaining for long in the park and the lack of lighting particularly deters users in the evenings and winter months.

The lack of seating also discourages users who require to rest frequently and families lack facilities to store buggies and wheel chairs when visiting the park

None of the play equipment caters for wheel chair users and access into the current pavilion is unsuitable for wheelchairs and provides no disabled toilet facilities.

#### Recommendations

- Create dedicated car park including designated blue badge holder parking bays
- Improve path surfaces
- Remove existing pavilion and build new with café and toilet facilities with access for disabled users from all direction within the park.
- Consider Alzheimer sufferers when developing the layout and decoration within the disabled toilets
- Provide seating at regular locations
- Provide shelter facilities within the park
- Provide lighting to primary path network
- Provide covered buggy shelter
- Provide additional play equipment items that allow access for wheel chair users.

## 4.4 Healthy, safe and secure

### 4.4.1 Health and Wellbeing

The appropriate provision of high quality equipment, facilities and infrastructure, along with good perceptions of cleanliness and personal safety will encourage the surrounding community to use the park and gain the physical and mental health benefits from doing so. Parks have the potential to offer recreation opportunities for those whose health is currently poor or for those who are less likely or unable to use formal sports facilities. Access to quality parks that encourage low-level, informal activity such as walking, jogging and cycling is vitally important.

There are further opportunities for activities such as volunteering, gardening and heritage interest meetings which help to build people's confidence and capacity to continue to contribute to their communities. Parks also offer a safe and secure environment for people to meet and to engender social cohesion.

#### Recommendations

- Liaise with appropriate health services to explore opportunities to deliver on local health priorities and help to meet health improvement targets.

- Implement actions highlighted within the Hermitage Park Activity Plan
- Develop the demonstration garden to allow food to be grown, picked, cooked and eaten, linking fresh organic food with the new cafe.
- Encourage the café franchisee to provide healthy food, utilizing food grown on site.
- Develop a trim trail together with SoSFitness for all to use.
- Ensure the park has both active places and quiet spaces where people can relax.

#### 4.4.2 Personal safety in the park

Recent survey work (see Activity Plan) indicates that safety concerns are an issue for those that use and those that do not use the park and there are also concerns regarding anti-social behaviours such as under-age drinking and litter, particularly after dark.

Close to the secondary Sinclair Street gate is a sign noting the bye laws of the park, these have been issued by Dumbarton District Council and date back to a time when Helensburgh came under Dumbarton. The bye laws no longer exist and to date the park has no up to date byelaws guiding behaviour.

The park currently has a single CCTV camera located to the south of the Pavilion, which is linked up to a monitor within the pavilion.

#### Recommendations

- install lighting to the primary path network which will offer good lit access linking the path entrances
- the new pavilion will be open in the evenings and weekends, throughout the year increasing casual surveillance making it safer for park users and encourage more visitors in to the park
- continue close liaison with police to reduce antisocial behaviour within the park
- Open up some of the lost views that provide enclosed, dark spaces caused by outsized conifers.
- Complete and ratify a series of bye laws to guide responsible use of the park.
- Develop a volunteer warden team to help guide people and provide a safe atmosphere for all.
- Retain the CCTV camera considering the best location to help deter undesirable behaviour.

#### 4.4.3 Dog-fouling

Dog-fouling is not a particular problem within the park, however faeces are occasionally left on the grass.

#### Recommendations

- Include clear signage and add bins to encourage dog-owners to clear up dog mess
- Make bio-degradable bags available
- Consider whether dog-fouling enforcement is required
- Promote responsible dog ownership through annual dog show or similar event.

#### 4.4.4 Quality of equipment, facilities and infrastructure

The quality of equipment, facilities and infrastructure is poor as stated previously. The pavilion is in a poor state of repair and is infrequently used. The original toilet block has been closed so the public have to use facilities at Victoria Halls, which is not convenient and play equipment caters only for younger children.

Facilities and opportunities for events are also limited due to lack of defined event space and power supply.

#### Recommendations

- Demolish the existing pavilion. The structural survey report indicates that the extent of repairs required is such that it is not a financially viable option to retain
- Build new pavilion with integrated café, toilets, storage, multifunction community room, Park Manager office, the new facility will become a much needed hub for the park.
- Demolish the old toilet block and shelter which are poor quality and architectural design
- Rationalise play facilities by locating together in the vicinity of the new pavilion. This gives opportunities for casual surveillance and allows parents to enjoy the pavilion facilities whilst children enjoy the play facilities.
- Broaden the range of play opportunities to older children by the introduction of adventure play equipment, upgraded putting green and natural play
- Refurbish the existing tennis court area to provide kick-about space and fountain plaza which can double up as event space with power supply accessible via the pavilion.
- Provide facilities for park staff and volunteers (both, tool, machinery and materials store)
- Develop the demonstration garden and associated facilities.

## 4.5 Well Maintained and Clean

### 4.5.1 Litter and waste management

Litter bins are provided at the entrances and within the park but require to be replaced and need to be suitable for both general waste and dog waste.

The bins are emptied weekly but more frequently when required during the summer months or when events are taking place.

Waste generated from horticultural operations i.e. leaf collection, grass cuttings, weeding etc. is put into the Green bay for recycling at the recycling centre.

#### Recommendations

- Continue to maintain high cleanliness standards throughout the park
- Replace all bins with new suitable bins for rubbish and dog waste and a type that does not allow birds to scavenge or wind to lift out items
- Consider providing recycling bins to encourage better recycling of materials on site (glass, cans, paper, compostable, etc.)
- Consider recommendations as set out within the Environmental Impact assessment in relation to managing green waste on site.

### 4.5.2 Grounds maintenance and horticulture

Park maintenance is undertaken regularly by Argyll and Bute Amenity Services, keeping the grass cut, shrub beds, herbaceous beds (although many beds have become overgrown and weedy) and hedges neat, tidy. Providing attractive, colourful floral displays and keeping the park generally tidy through collection of leaves during the autumn / winter. The bowling green and pitch n putt green are also included within the maintenance. However, due to service choice cuts certain jobs formerly undertaken on a regular basis are either being reduced or not undertaken at all, the park is suffering because of this.

Bedding plants are being replaced with herbaceous plants but the beds are not being maintained nor are plants being split and replanted, as a result the more vigorous varieties are taking over as well as weeds.

The bowling green is deteriorating and part no longer playable due to a lack of annual procedures that removed moss. Whilst some repairs are being undertaken e.g. bridge fence repairs, the materials being replaced are aesthetically poor. No new planting of trees or shrubs has been undertaken for a number of years.

Friends of Hermitage Park Association assist by carrying out monthly activity days, which involves the cutting back of many overgrown areas, some weeding and rubbish clearance.

A number of the parkland trees are over-mature and require arboricultural attention, particularly the large coniferous species which are blocking views and are unsympathetic to the original design of the park. Invasive, non-native species i.e. Japanese Knotweed are spreading into paths. Specialist areas of planting such as the Japanese garden are overgrown these need tackling and trees and shrubs are insufficiently pruned,

#### Recommendations

- General horticultural standards and the maintenance of care need to be improved
- New planting policy to refresh tired and poor plantings and to provide low maintenance but high impact displays needs to be implemented, which will include a reduction of annual bedding displays
- The Japanese garden needs to be redesigned and replanted with appropriate species.
- Following the tinning out of some of the over mature and poor shaped trees a new planting plan needs developing. New planting plan for the whole park needs developing and implementing
- Training and development of volunteers and key Users Group members who have an interest in developing and maintaining certain areas (e.g. Cornerstone and TTH demonstration garden) to assist with specific garden and maintenance tasks

#### 4.5.3 Buildings, facilities and infrastructure maintenance

The existing pavilion, which includes a café, is underutilised and in poor condition and blocks views in to the park, giving visitors a poor first impression. SOS fitness operate from and store their equipment in the pavilion and also oversee the hiring out of bowling and pitch n putt equipment. The former tennis courts (one tarmac, once blaze) are in a poor state of repair. The Japanese style shelter, whilst performing a function is also in poor condition and has recently had its low walls removed to reduce problems of loitering and anti-social behaviour. The separate toilet block is closed and this along with the pavilion toilets also being closed for much of the time reduces the number of people willing to stay long in the park. There is no schedule of maintenance works for any of the buildings within the park.

Benches and litter bins are insufficient in quantity and quality. The fencing to the bridges has recently been replaced but is merely functional rather than aesthetically appropriate.

Paths are in poor condition, particularly suffering from a lack of drainage and as such many are suffering from extensive erosion to the surfaces.

Boundary walls are in good condition but the Memorial Garden survey report has highlighted that a programme of repair works is required.

The Hermitage Well requires remedial work to avoid further decline and to bring it back to an attractive park feature.

#### Recommendations

- Demolish pavilion and replace with new energy efficient building, incorporating café, toilet facilities, store, and community room available to hire
- Demolish the shelter
- Demolish the toilet block
- Implement recommendations of Memorial Garden conservation plan
- Consider replacing bridge fencing to style more appropriate to original park design
- Replace and increase seats and bins
- Resurface paths and introduce appropriate drainage

#### 4.5.4 Equipment maintenance

The children's play equipment is relatively (2014) and is inspected weekly by the Amenity Section Technical Officer. It caters primarily for young children. Whilst the putting green is reasonable well-maintained, the bowling green is not and has a high level of moss within. Both are rarely used. The bowling club only has 7 members and the pavilion is not open sufficiently often to allow regular hire of equipment.

The tennis courts are in very poor condition and consequently are not used for this purpose but are used for informal ball games, by SOS Fitness and Hermitage Primary school for general fitness training. The blaise finish, which is particularly poor, had the surface topped up two years ago, and the netting around the whole site was patched in the Spring (2015)

#### Recommendations

- Retain the best pieces of existing play equipment, but relocate and combine with new play facilities to broaden appeal to a greater age range
- Resurface the tennis courts to turn in to kick-about area, lined and (low) nets included for mini/walkingfootball, basketball and other sports.
- Retain majority of the area of the bowling green but turn in to new multifunction lawn games area, which will include a smaller pitch and put space. supported by the new pavilion
- Introduce natural play options throughout the woodland and a number of open areas of the park

## 4.6 Sustainability

### 4.6.1 Horticultural and Arboricultural management

Hermitage Park has approximately 500 trees and shrubs. A number of the parkland trees are over-mature and require attention but the Tree Survey indicates that most are moderate or high quality. The Tree Survey was commissioned to set out the condition of all the trees and any arboricultural recommendations. This will identify work to sustain the attractive and valuable tree cover in the park.

Currently there is no planned maintenance carried out on the trees. There is significant scope for improvement in terms of arboricultural management.

The park has a large area of bedding plants and potentially high maintenance areas. Whilst the Master plan will go some way to reducing high impact areas and work to reduce resource needs to

manage and maintain the areas, the current beds and borders have a high level of aggressive weeds within that are taking over beds.

#### Recommendations

- Log and chip (where possible) dead wood and use chippings for composting / recycling within the maintenance of woodland areas
- Thin out understory and overgrown ground cover and develop a planting programme
- Set out and implement eradication programme for invasive species
- Implement proposals identified in the Tree Survey i.e.  
remove poor quality / suppressed trees  
remove cypress cultivars as these have little arboricultural interest  
over-mature trees should be crown reduced to extend their life and reduce risk of trees dropping limbs and causing damage
- Update current digitised plant records and maintain.
- Continue to work with Parklands School with a view to working together to improve the woodland area next to the park.
- Develop a new planting programme for the park that will reduce maintenance but will deliver a high quality display with year round interest.

#### 4.6.2 Environmental Impact

A comprehensive environmental assessment of the park and current maintenance practices was complete in July 2015 (full copy available in Appendix X). The assessment covered the maintenance of the following areas and provided a series of proposals to reduce further the environmental impact of each:

- Grass
- Trees and Shrubs
- Beds
- Hard Standing
- Boundaries
- Buildings

#### Recommendations

- To consider each of the proposals set out within the report and apply them to the park where resources allow.
- To undertake an annual assessment and monitor the environmental impact assessment and share good practice with others.
- Develop the new pavilion incorporating the proposed renewables (Water catchment, Photovoltaics, greenroof (tbc), wood burning stove, etc.)
- Develop the reed-bed system with a view to improving water quality through the park.

#### 4.6.3 Financial sustainability

With ever shrinking budgets the park must work towards becoming more financially sustainable. A number of partnerships are being developed as part of the project and are set out in the Activity Plan but include working with the Men's Shed to develop park furniture and help maintain it, work with a number of partnerships to pool resources and develop a volunteer co-ordinator post, to develop a dedicated fund for the park with the aim of developing an endowment for the park.

- Work with the FoHPA to develop a Hermitage Park Sink/endowment fund.
- Help maximise income through the new pavilion and other facilities being planned for the park.

- Develop a series of events that help generate income.
- Develop partnerships to share skills, pool resources and grow and develop a firm voluntary base for the park.
- New pavilion to incorporate modern energy efficient systems and income generating/money saving potential (photovoltaic cells)

## 4.7 Conservation and heritage

### 4.7.1 Conservation of natural features, wild fauna and flora

There is little evidence of management practices that serve to specifically enhance biodiversity and therefore there is considerable potential to improve in this respect.

There is little in the way of wildflower species in the park. Biodiversity, seasonal interest and colour would be broadened by reducing the mowing frequency at the margins of woodlands to increase diversity, which can be further enhanced by the inclusion of suitable wildflower species mixes.

The Milligs Burn and small stream the feeds in from the north are attractive water features, but water quality needs to be improved and there are no areas suitable for amphibians to spawn. The introduction of ponds would significantly broaden habitats for species reliant on water for reproduction.

The Tree Survey indicates that the riparian trees, associated with the burn, are an important wildlife corridor and that this habitat could be enhanced with new planting to preserve and invest in the long term continuation of this feature.

### Recommendations

- Introduce native species and wildflower gardening techniques to the park, develop transition zones between mown grass and nectar rich grass areas.
- Increase and where possible select plants that will enhance and encourage a broader diversity of fauna.
- Work with appropriate authorities to monitor and where possible improve water quality
- Introduce as diverse a variety of habitats into the park to encourage a broader range of flora and fauna to visit and live. To including bird, bat, etc. boxes, habitat piles, specific food plants, safe access to water, etc.
- Introduce reed filter beds to improve water quality and increase water habitat biodiversity
- Introduce new pond and marginal/bog areas to introduce new water habitats and associated features
- Broaden the range of riparian species along Milligs Burn

### 4.7.2 Conservation of buildings and structures

The park has a long and complex history which should be promoted for the benefit of park visitors and others. There is much historic and archaeological interest in the park, however this is not evident to most park users, the mill is now quite hidden. There is however great scope to enhance the heritage and use the rich archive.

The A' Listed War Memorial although the main memorial is in good condition the much older walled garden and iron gates require repair. The memorial has been noted on the Buildings at Risk Register.

The pavilion, however, is not in good condition or fit for purpose. The result of the structural survey and Business Plan has indicated that the existing pavilion should be demolished and replaced with a

new structure that can support the park functions and be designed to modern energy performance requirements.

#### Recommendations

- Conserve the buildings and structures of value ( see Conservation Management Plan for more detail) i.e. Wall memorial, Milligs mill remains, and Hermitage well
- Encourage historical and archaeological initiatives in the park through volunteering, walking trails, events and displays
- Introduce interpretation elements highlighting key aspects of the park’s heritage e.g. Hermitage House, Milligs mill, former bandstand
- Remove poor quality structures i.e. shelter, pavilion, toilet block

## 4.8 Community Involvement

Historically the park attracted tourists (principally from Glasgow) as well as local residents, but today the park users are primarily locals. Users however are critical of the path surfaces, lack of lighting, poor facilities (particularly no toilets) and incidents of anti-social behaviour and these issues have over recent years resulted in a decline in visitors and use of the park for community events.

The local residents raised the funds for the children’s play park, offering a range of play features but they principally cater for the younger age groups.

Friends of Hermitage Park Association regularly provide time to assist with maintenance operations and also, together with members of the Hermitage Park Users Group actively fund raise for a variety of park items.

#### Recommendations

- Continue to support the Friends of Hermitage Park and other local user groups to recognise the valuable input they can have to the management, maintenance and attraction of the park
- Promote use of the park, following refurbishment, for organised events and activities as part of a marketing plan
- Explore opportunities to encourage volunteering opportunities within the park
- Support community engagement and volunteering through the HLF project

## 4.9 Marketing

### 4.9.1 Marketing and promotion

Marketing and promotion is currently undertaken as part of a park strategy focusing on the progress of the HLF project. The Council website includes a Hermitage Park web page with update information and a plan of the HLF process, with a link to the most recent version of the Hermitage Park newsletter, which is also available via email by signing up and via paper copies that are distributed locally.

#### Digital

The current Argyll and Bute Council website is not an easy site to navigate to find information and the current Hermitage Park web page has limited information on it at the moment.

The FoHPA and Argyll and Bute Council pooled resources to erect a new notice board for the park, located on the side of the pavilion. As part of the Development stage a logo for the park has been



developed with the strap-line 'Growing out Park together'. It has been used on three large banners to promote the project, consultation days and is used by the Friends to promote events.

#### Recommendations

- Review and update the marketing and communication plan for the Park
- Ensure that events are well advertised
- Re-site the new display board/case to a new site and add a further case close to the new pavilion
- Improve access and content of digital information for the park

#### 4.9.2 Provision of appropriate information

Currently there is no signage or information informing visitors of the history, archaeology or biodiversity interest within the park.

A park newsletter is available via the Council website as is an events calendar, although this is not specific to any events taking place in Hermitage Park. Recently, £100 was raised by the Friends of Hermitage Park Association for a notice board, with the remaining funds provided by Amenity Services. The notice board was installed in January 2015 and is located on the west elevation of the Pavilion.

#### Recommendations

- As part of a marketing and communication plan, a newsletter, events calendar and other park information should be developed and distributed to as wide an audience as possible. This will be promoted under the HLF project
- Introduce interpretation recommendations as set out in the Hermitage Park Interpretation Strategy

#### 4.9.3 Provision of appropriate Education / Interpretation information

Currently there is no educational and interpretation information within the park as such there is extensive scope to develop appropriate educational and interpretation information for Hermitage Park and enhance the visitor experience, particularly for local school pupils, people with learning difficulties and special needs.

The Hermitage Primary School and Parklands School both bound the park and there are potentially many opportunities for these pupils to utilise the park as part of the school curriculum.

Consultation carried out as part of the Activity Plan indicates that pupils from these schools and others in the district were not aware of the history of the park, although they knew about the war memorial.

All users and target groups have expressed an interest in learning more about the park, but as well as improving the interpretation aspects, other facilities and infrastructure also needs to be improved

#### Recommendations

- Develop materials about park's heritage and biodiversity. This will also be promoted as part of the HLF project and volunteers and other members of the public will be encouraged to contribute
- Introduce interpretation recommendations as set out in the Hermitage Park Interpretation Strategy
- Expand school and other user group visits to the park by improving facilities i.e. café, shelters for picnics, toilets, path surface upgrades

## 4.10 Management

Currently there is nothing specific with regards to Hermitage Park management, just a simple schedule of works. This plan will be the first for the park.

### Recommendations

- Set up an improvement plan
- Establish a monitoring system which measures progress towards implementation of the management plan and meets the requirements of HLF
- Explore income generation opportunities and sources of external funding

## 4.11 HLF Parks for People Project

If successful with its bid for HLF funding for Hermitage Park, Argyll and Bute Council will require to ensure that any projects supported through the fund will be properly managed and maintained in accordance with the grant criteria. In general, assurance is required that a 10 year plan for management and maintenance is provided with resources identified and confirmed. In accordance with the range of projects to be included in the HLF bid, this will cover infrastructure projects, activities and additional staff. This section of the plan identifies the range of proposed projects and details the management and maintenance resources required.

### The Pavilion

The existing pavilion, estimated to have been erected sometime between the late 1960's to early 1970's, is in a poor state of repair. The Structural Inspection Report has found it to be dilapidated and insubstantial with the predominant defect identified as water ingress.

Due to its poor condition the pavilion is little used. The main users are SOS fitness, who regularly run fitness training classes and the Council Maintenance Department who use part of the building for storing equipment. The bowling club also makes use of the pavilion, storing equipment there, but with just 7 members use is occasional. The pavilion is not generally available to the public, although SOS fitness runs a kiosk and hires out equipment for bowling and putting. The toilets are not available for public use.

Remediation would likely involve removal of all the timber cladding and a sizeable portion of roof sheathing, any rotten timbers and plasterboard finishes. It is expected that what would remain would not really be worth saving both in material terms and the restrictions such might impose on future development. The report concludes that it is difficult to envisage the viability of retention of this building and it recommends that the existing pavilion should be demolished.

After consultation and responding to the conclusions of the Business Plan, the new pavilion is to be located at the northern Sinclair Street entrance where it will have a high visual presence and also have a south facing aspect. The new Pavilion building will have three primary uses. It will provide a café for visitors and non-visitors, a multipurpose activity and meeting room and public toilets.

It will have a 60 cover café with a further 40 outside on the terrace, flexible / multi-use space for teaching or keep fit, public toilets and the public will be able to hire equipment for the adjacent lawn games area. Due to the Feedin Tarriff changing it is likely that only a heat reclaim ventilation system will be cost effective.

### Recommendations

- Subject to receiving full HLF approval, demolish the existing structure and construct new pavilion
- Add an enclosed area for utilities (refuse)

### Maintenance and Interpretation of Park Heritage

This project has significant potential to generate interest in the park and increase visitor numbers and length of stay.

In relation to archaeological interest, during the development phase of the HLF project, initial work has been undertaken and it is hoped that, subject to further HLF approval, further research, restoration and interpretation works can be undertaken through experts and volunteers.

Similarly, there is considerable human history relating to the park, extending back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Research by local historians, through the Conservation and Management Plan and the Interpretation Plan has been undertaken and through this HLF project the findings can be presented for the benefit of park visitors.

### Recommendations

- Work with archaeological groups to research and develop works that can be interpreted for park visitors
- Work with local historians to collate, investigate and publish the history of the park
- Encourage the involvement in park heritage activities
- Implement the 9 interpretation elements, through the 6 interpretive themes as identified in the Interpretation Strategy i.e.
  - The Site
  - A Family Home
  - The Public Park
  - The Mill
  - War Time History
  - Horticulture and Gardening
- Implement the recommendations of the War Memorial Report

### Improvements to the park entrances

The entrances on Sinclair Street and Grant Street are defined by the original stone walls and piers and are in reasonable repair but the two entrances on Victoria Street are not defined at all and of all the entrances only the north entrance on Sinclair Street includes a sign to inform visitors that you are entering Hermitage Park.

To improve legibility it will be important that all the park entrances are clearly defined.

### Recommendations

- Subject to HLF approval the intention is to incorporate park signage at all entrances, including name and park plan for orientation – see also recommendations within the Interpretation Strategy

### Path resurfacing

The path surfaces, within the park, are extremely poor, suffering in many instances from erosion and in some locations from damage by invasion from Japanese Knotweed. As such access for people in wheelchairs, pushing buggies and children riding bicycles or scooters is almost impossible and feedback has indicated that the poor path surfaces actively deter people from visiting the park. Within the Memorial Garden the gravel path surfaces also make access difficult, if not impossible, for visitors in wheelchairs.

To encourage users of all groups all the paths within the park will require to have the surfacing addressed to improve accessibility.

### Recommendations

- Subject to HLF approval resurface the principle paths with red chip asphalt, with integrated drainage to provide a smooth surface suitable for all users
- Resurface secondary paths and paths within the Memorial Garden with a hoggan-style bound gravel surface to improve accessibility

## **Ponds**

Milligs Burn and the stream the fed the former Milligs Mill are both significant assets to the park in terms of providing additional visual and ecological interest. The burn also is attractive in terms of the sound of the movement of water.

However, accessibility is not easy and to enhance the biodiversity and ecology of the park and also to provide easier access to water, particularly for children to pond dip, it would be an advantage to include new ponds within the park.

There was a former ornamental lily pond, but the proposed ponds would be more natural in character, incorporating predominantly native aquatic and emergent species, although one pond would include a hard edge to allow access for all park users.

## **Recommendations**

- Subject to HLF approval create two ponds on the line of the former mill feed to relate to the heritage of the park and broaden ecological habitats
- One pond entirely natural purely for the benefit of wildlife
- One pond to be designed to include a hard edge to allow access for all and learning opportunities

## **Water Gardens**

The existing mill feed can be located within the Japanese Gardens but is heavily overgrown and water tests indicate contamination problems.

As stated in the Conservation Management Plan, it is an important historic and landscape feature that merits being made more visible.

To improve the visual amenity and reinstate the Japanese Garden theme, broaden ecology and to tackle the water quality issues this water course will require clearing out and a method of water treatment included.

## **Recommendations**

- Clear out water course of overgrown planting
- Introduce reed bed planting to filter out contaminants and improve water quality before it enters the ponds
- Remove any plants not associated with Japanese style water gardens
- Replant with appropriate ornamental species
- Open up views from adjacent path to the water gardens

## **Milligs Burn**

The burn runs diagonally through the park from north-east to south-west, much of it with steeply sloping and rocky banks or reveted with stonework. Its origin appears to be from two reservoirs north of Helensburgh and ultimately flows to the Clyde. Where it enters the park it passes through a culvert emerging to the south of the Hermits Well.

The Milligs Burn is visually very attractive and also provides the sound of moving water, particularly after times of heavy rainfall which is an additional quality of the park.

The burn would significantly benefit from clearing out of debris and vegetation which has built up in places and for sections of the banks to be repaired to improve access.

Biodiversity would also be improved through the addition of appropriate native water edge species and the existing planting managed to broaden habitats for birds and insects.

#### Recommendations

- Clear out burn of overgrown planting
- Repair damaged sections of banks and stonework
- Introduce new native water edge planting and manage existing planting to broaden water edge habitats

#### Park lighting and power for events

Currently the park does not include any lighting and as such visitors are dissuaded from using the park in the winter and once it becomes dark. The perception is that the lack of lighting also encourages anti-social use and behaviour.

The Council is keen to promote greater use of the park and the new pavilion throughout the year. Column mounted lights are proposed to the primary path network ensuring well lit routes linking the park entrances and around the pavilion. It is expected that this lighting will remove any security concerns for park users. Any lighting installed will be energy efficient and low maintenance. In addition the design will be selected to keep light pollution to a minimum and avoid light straying into the central park area to ensure dark conditions for nocturnal species.

To facilitate the use of the park for more and different events, a dedicated power supply to the plaza areas will be installed. This will allow a range of activities/uses to utilise a power source without the need for generators and result in less noise and emissions. The Council is keen to attract a wide range of musical and theatrical events in to the park. The location of the event space takes advantage of the hard-standing areas around the pavilion, which also means easy access to toilet facilities.

#### Recommendations

- Subject to HLF approval it is proposed to install column lighting to the primary path network linking the main entrances
- A power supply is proposed to be installed to support the events area

#### Plazas

To open up views in to the park from the main Sinclair Street entrance and provide a setting for the pavilion with space for activities, the design proposals are to create an upper plaza in granite paving which extends along the northern façade of the pavilion, incorporating a formal grid of trees, and links via a flight of steps to the lower plaza surfaced in red asphalt incorporating a number of fountain jets.

This area is currently the old tennis courts laid out within the boundaries of the original mill pond. The intention is that this space can be used informally for play and also, with the fountains switched off become an events space utilising the steps as informal seating.

Access for wheelchair users between the two plaza areas is via a new ramp to the west of the new pavilion.

#### Recommendations

- Subject to HLF approval it is proposed to create a two level plaza area providing a setting for the proposed new pavilion and a flexible use play and event space

### **Play area and play facilities**

The current play facilities, whilst in good condition, are targeted at a young age group and are not integrated particularly well in the park. To ensure that Hermitage Park continues to offer interesting and challenging opportunities to children of all ages, it is proposed to renew and relocate the play area.

Through the consultation process it has been determined that a number of the best pieces of the existing play equipment are to be retained and refurbished and integrated with a new, themed Adventure Play area. The location of the play area is to be to the south of the pavilion which will allow parents to watch over the activities whilst having the option to enjoy the café facilities.

In addition, consultation highlighted the popular request for a new pitch 'n' putt course. This is to be located on the bowling green in front of the pavilion but will be set out to allow for other lawn games. This will allow easy access to hire of equipment at the pavilion, there will be passive surveillance provided by the proximity to the pavilion and also easy access to pavilion facilities.

By grouping the play facilities together it allows for all age groups to mingle, maintenance and management of these facilities are co-ordinated and there is a single, identifiable, main play zone, although of course the whole park is available for play.

### **Recommendations**

- Subject to HLF approval it is proposed to relocate and refurbish a number of the existing pieces of play equipment and integrate with new Adventure Play facilities
- A new lawn games area will be located on the existing bowling green site and equipment can be hired from the new pavilion

### **Park Furniture**

Currently there is limited furniture within the park. Seating and bins are insufficient in number and of poor quality. There are no bike stands included within the park. Consultation has highlighted the need for areas for visitors to safely leave buggies and somewhere for groups to have picnics.

The inclusion of seating would provide much needed places for rest and relaxation, particularly those visitors who require frequent places to rest. New bike stands would encourage additional visitors to cycle to the park.

As well as new seating in the park, additional memorial benches would be included within the Memorial Garden.

### **Recommendations**

- Include additional seating throughout the park. There is the possibility that seats could be purchased via fundraising or seats fabricated by volunteer groups
- Include bike racks at the two Sinclair Street entrances i.e. within the proposed car park and by the proposed pavilion
- Include a buggy shelter
- Replace park bins and increase numbers
- Provide facilities for picnics and groups to sit

### **Signage and Interpretation**

Other than a single park sign at the Sinclair Street north entrance, there are no other entrance signs information signs or orientation signs within the park.

New signs are required at the entrance and throughout the park, to welcome visitors, assist with orientation and to provide information about the park.

In addition, the pavilion will include notice boards, informing visitors of regular and feature events occurring in the park.

#### Recommendations

- Subject to HLF approval new entrance, orientation and interpretation signs will be included to guide and inform visitors

#### **Memorial Garden restoration**

The Memorial Garden is an extremely important part of Hermitage Park and offers visitors a place of quiet contemplation.

#### Recommendations

- Implement the recommendations set out in the War Memorial Report to repair sections of the wall and replace the gates
- Reinstate section of missing Yew hedge
- Repair the memorial pool
- Upgrade the paths within the garden to improve accessibility
- Add additional colour and interest through new planting
- Install 4 new memorial benches, representing the Army, Airforce, Navy and Civilians

#### **Demonstration Gardens**

Currently the area proposed for the demonstration gardens is the existing children's play area. Consultation has indicated that there is a strong desire to include a series of demonstration gardens that would be overseen by Argyll and Bute Council, but that individual plots would be managed by a variety of community groups e.g. local community groups, schools, horticultural societies.

The intention is to share horticultural skills and techniques, trialing different varieties of particular species, growing an A to Z of fruits and vegetables that can be grown within the Helensburgh climate and improving a knowledge base, providing opportunities for all age groups and abilities and offering experience and training. The demonstration garden will provide a variety of training covering a broad range of garden based learning activities.

It is also the intention that these demonstration gardens would include water capture facilities and be the location for composting materials arising from the park, taking cuttings and potting on plants from within the park which can, when large enough be used for replacement planting or raising money through sales.

The area will be open during the day for all to access; however, it will be able to be locked on an evening to protect the gardens and equipment, the area which would be fenced off would also be locked at night / out of hours.

The demonstration garden will reflect to some extent the former kitchen garden (set within the existing walled memorial garden) laid out when Hermitage House was a family home and the interest from locals as part of the consultation process. The area will be set out in the form of a typical kitchen garden with growing plots set within a rectilinear series of paths. The west facing wall of the former kitchen garden will be utilised to develop a vertical orchard.

#### Recommendations





- Subject to HLF approval set out the basic framework and plots for the gardens by implementing the path network
- Install a potting shed / storage facility and greenhouse which will be accessible to all plot users during 'working' hours
- Install a bothy / tea-room accessible to those working in the garden and visitors
- Install the boundary fencing and access gates for security and safety purposes
- Install water capture facilities
- Install composting site

### **Car Parking Facilities**

Currently there are no parking facilities, specifically dedicated to the park. Visitors arriving by car either park in the Victoria Halls car park or park on the adjacent streets; neither of which is ideal.

Although the HLF does not fund parking, consultation has indicated that the lack of parking is a problem and to encourage visitors Argyll and Bute Council have agreed to the funding for a 23 space car park, which includes 4 disabled spaces, accessed from the Victoria Halls car park.

To ensure that the parking facilities are used only by park visitors, the car park will be managed in conjunction with the Victoria Halls.

### **Recommendations**

- Clearly indicate Victoria Halls parking bays by white lining
- Remove trees, shrubs and regrade area designated for parking and surface with hardcore and kerb edge restraints
- Sell fruit / vegetables / flowers for additional income

#### 4.12 Management and Maintenance Implications of HLF Project

The projects detailed above will have new and/or additional management and maintenance resource implications for the Park and allowance will need to be made to ensure that the investment into the park will be supported.

This Management and Maintenance Plan will combine the current park operations that are carried out and the obligations arising from the proposed park projects in terms of responsibility for the maintenance and management requirements.

Table 3 identifies the projects, summaries the proposed works and sets out both the primary resource, if any, for these elements and identifies any additional resource requirements.

**Table 3:**

Project	Proposed Works	Current Resource	Estimated future Resources
<b>Pavilion</b>	Demolition of existing structure and construction of new pavilion	HLF project funding	CRA budget buildings
<b>Park Heritage</b>	Incorporate the 9 interpretive elements identified within the Interpretation Strategy report	None – new project	-
<b>Park Entrances</b>	Include new signage and location maps to raise profile of the park	None – new project	Future grants
<b>Paths</b>	Resurface and re-edge the paths within the park and memorial garden	HLF project	tbc
<b>Ponds</b>	Create two new natural ponds with access for pond dipping	None – new project	Grants (SNH, etc.)
<b>Water Gardens</b>	Reinstate Japanese theme. Include filter beds. Open up views	HLF project	Park Budget/sink fund
<b>Milligs Burn</b>	Clean out rubbish. Cut back overgrown plants. Repair banks.  Plant new native species	HLF project	Park Budget
<b>Lighting</b>	Provide path lighting to primary path network	None – new project	Park Budget
<b>Power</b>	Include ‘pop-up’ power supply for events	None – new project	FoVH to fund and maintain
<b>Plazas</b>	Create flexible, multi-use areas	None – new	Park Budget/sink

Project	Proposed Works	Current Resource	Estimated future Resources
	for events and general play	project	fund
<b>Play Facilities</b>	Relocate existing facilities and create new play area	HLF project	Park Budget
<b>Park Furniture</b>	Replace existing benches and bins and include new, plus bike racks and buggy shelter	HLF project	Park Budget
<b>Signage</b>	Within the park include new signage for orientation and information purposes	None – new project	Park Budget/sink fund/grants
<b>Memorial Garden</b>	Undertake restoration works to walls. Repair pool	CRA cemetery	Future grants and CRA cemetery
<b>Demonstration Gardens</b>	Create path and plots. Install shed and green house	None – new project	Park Budget/sink fund
<b>Car Parking</b>	Create new parking facilities dedicated to the park	None – new project/Section 75 fund ABC	

In addition, the Hermitage Park Activity Plan identifies the costs associated with delivering park activities, volunteering and training to be around £311,100 covering the period 2016 to 2020.

## 5. How are we going to get there?



Figure 8: War memorial and ornamental gates

### 5.1 Park Action Plans

This section sets out an action plan (see Table 3) to take forward recommendations resulting from the analysis undertaken in Part 2 - WHERE DO WE WANT TO GET TO? The action plan identifies in greater detail how recommendations can be met. In particular, it outlines projected timescales, responsibilities, potential partners and any resource implications.

Table 3: Action Plan 2016 – 2021

Recommendation	Year (1 - 5)	Responsibility	Partners	Resource Implication
Demolish disused toilet block	1	Contractor (Delivery Stage)		HLF project £
Demolish existing pavilion	1			HLF project £
Demolish shelter	1			HLF project £
Liaise with relevant utilities to connect to water, electricity etc	1	Contractor (Delivery Stage)/Park Manager		HLF project
Ensure that restricted access & safety measures are communicated to park users	1	Park Manager/ Contractor (Delivery Stage)		HLF project
Construct new pavilion and access ramps	1-2	Contractor (Delivery Stage)		Park Budget
Construct car park	1	Contractor (Delivery Stage)		ABC –Section 75 fund
Remove identified conifers / other trees that are unsympathetic to the original park design & blocking views	1	Park Manager/ external contractor		HLF project
Develop liaison with police to develop plan and programme to reduce anti-social behaviour within the park	1	Park Manager	Cornerstone and Helensburgh & Lomond Carers	

Recommendation	Year (1 - 5)	Responsibility	Partners	Resource Implication
Develop Park specific Bye Laws inc. dog behaviour & fouling	1	Park Manager and Amenity Section		ABC (staffing)
Continue to maintain high cleanliness standards throughout the park	1	Park Manager	FoHPA Volunteers Men's Shed	Park Budget
Prepare & distribute regular newsletter/events calendar	1	Park Manager	FoHPA Volunteers	ABC (staffing) and park budget
Undertake comprehensive annual user survey	1 to 5	Park Manager	FoHPA Volunteers	
Continue to support Friends of Hermitage Park & other local user groups	1	Park Manager		ABC Staffing
Create grass terrace & Hermitage House layout	2	Contractor (Delivery Stage)/ Park Manager		HLF project
Resurface primary paths with red asphalt and	2	Contractor (Delivery Stage)		HLF project
Resurface paths in Memorial Garden to improve access for all	2	Contractor (Delivery Stage)		HLF project
Install park lighting	2	Contractor (Delivery Stage)/ Park Manager	Men's Shed	HLF project
Install power supply for park events	2	Contractor (Delivery Stage)/ Park Manager	FoVH volunteers	£tbc amount to be raided by FoVH over 3 year period
Undertake repairs & remedial work to Memorial Garden, pool & planting	2	Contractor (Delivery Stage)/ Park Manager	FoHPA Volunteers	HLF project
Construct plazas & steps (including fountains)	2	Contractor (Delivery Stage)/		HLF project
Install benches / seating throughout the park	2	Contractor (Delivery Stage)/ Park Manager	Men's Shed	HLF project
Install new bins, suitable for litter & dog waste	2	Contractor (Delivery Stage)/ Park Manager	Men's Shed	HLF project
Provide cycle racks	2	Contractor (Delivery Stage)/ Park Manager	Men's Shed	HLF project/other funding tbc
Implement the recommendations set out in the Tree Survey	2	Contractor (Delivery Stage)/ Park Manager		HLF project
Log and chip some of the dead wood & generally thin-out the woodland	2	Contractor (Delivery Stage)/ Park Manager		HLF project/ABC staff

Recommendation	Year (1 - 5)	Responsibility	Partners	Resource Implication
Implement procedures to eliminate invasive species	2	Park Manager		Park budget
Resurface secondary paths	3	Contractor (Delivery Stage)		HLF project
Install park shelter facilities	3	Contractor (Delivery Stage)		HLF project
Install covered buggy shelter	3	Contractor (Delivery Stage)/ Park Manager	Men's Shed	HLF project
Install signage at entrances & within park	3	Contractor (Delivery Stage)/ Park Manager		HLF project
Install location maps for improved orientation	3	Contractor (Delivery Stage)/ Park Manager		HLF project
Clean out Milligs Burn & plant new riparian species	4	Park Manager	FoHPA Volunteers	HLF project/Other sources tbc
Create new play area	3	Contractor (Delivery Stage)/ Park Manager	tbc	HLF project
Relocate retained play equipment to new play area	3	Contractor (Delivery Stage)/ Park Manager		HLF project
Convert bowling green to lawn games area	3	Park Manager/ Contractor (Delivery Stage)		HLF project
Implement formal monitoring schemes for all infrastructure & equipment in the park	3	Park Manager		ABC (staffing)
Construct Demonstration Garden, shed, greenhouse & bothy	3	Park Manager/ Contractor (Delivery Stage)	Men's Shed FoHPA Volunteers	HLF project/Park Budget/other sources tbc
Remove playground fence & replace with new security fencing & gates to Demonstration Garden	3	Contractor (Delivery Stage)/ Park Manager	FoHPA Volunteers	HLF project
Install water capture & composting facilities to Demonstration Garden	3	Park Manager/ Contractor (Delivery Stage)	Men's Shed FoHPA Volunteers	HLF project/Park Budget/other sources tbc
Clean out & repair Hermitage Well	3	Contractor (Delivery Stage)	FoHPA Volunteers	HLF project
Set up monitoring system which measures progress towards implementation of management plan	3	Park Manager		
Explore income generation	3	Park Manager	FoHPA/Users	

Recommendation	Year (1 - 5)	Responsibility	Partners	Resource Implication
opportunities & external funding streams			Group	
Introduce natural play elements throughout the park	4	Contractor (Delivery Stage)/ Park Manager	Tbc	Park Budget/HLF project
Install interpretation elements	4	Contractor (Delivery Stage)/ Park Manager		HLF project
Reduce hedge height & crown raise trees along Sinclair Street	4	Park Manager	FoHPA Volunteers	
Construct new ponds	4	Contractor (Delivery Stage)/ Park Manager	FoHPA Volunteers	HLF project
Construct reed filter beds to improve water quality	4	Contractor (Delivery Stage)/ Park Manager	FoHPA Volunteers	HLF project
Explore opportunities to encourage volunteering activities within the park	4	Park Manager	Kilmahew/AICT	Park Budget
Update communication plan	4	Park Manager/ Communication Team		ABC (staffing)
Develop interactive methods of information	4	Contractor (Delivery Stage)/ Park Manager	FoHPA Volunteers (Cornerstone)	ABC (staffing)/ HLF project
Promote use of the park for organised events & activities as part of a marketing plan	4	Contractor (Delivery Stage)/ Park Manager	FoHPA Volunteers	ABC (staffing)/HLF project
Address disability & access as part of an Access Plan	5	Contractor (Delivery Stage)/ Park Manager	FoHPA Volunteers	HLF project
Consider replacing bridge parapets with more appropriate style	5	Park Manager/ Contractor (Delivery Stage)	Men's Shed	Park Budget/other sources tbc
Implement water monitoring & cleansing programme	5	Park Manager		Park Budget
Undertake wildflower planting in woodland areas	5	Park Manager	FoHPA Volunteers	HLF project
Install bird & bat boxes to increase bird and bat numbers	5	Park Manager	Men's Shed/ Schools	HLF project
As park use increases, set up dialogue with bus companies	5	Park Manager		ABC (staffing)

## 5.2 Resources

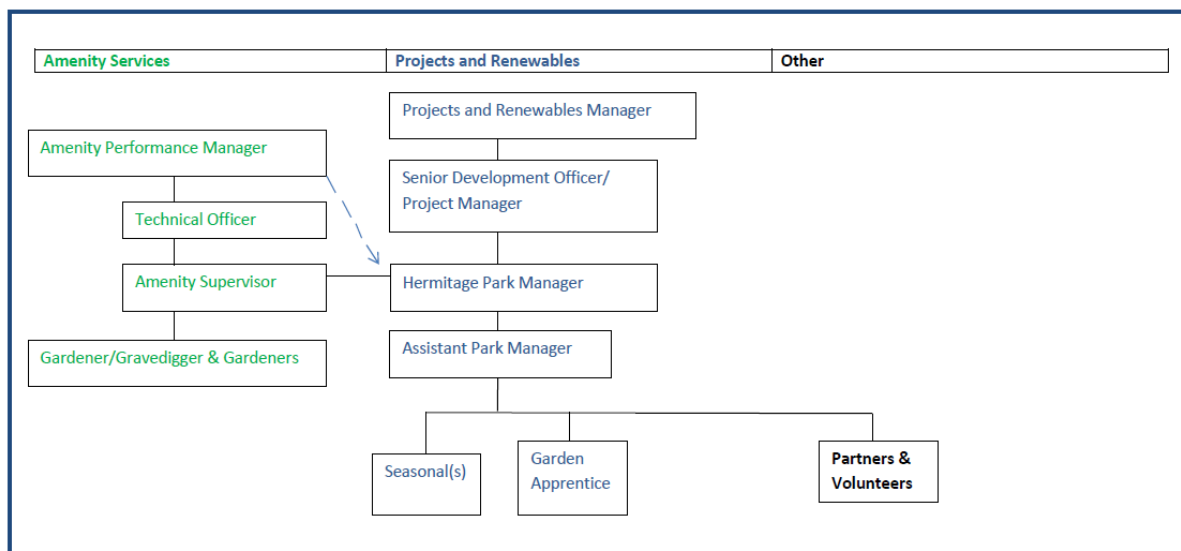
### 5.2.1 Staffing

Staffing is paramount to the HLF delivery stage and long-term management and maintenance of Hermitage Park. As part of the process Argyll and Bute Council have undertaken an assessment of the current staffing and resources both current and future linked to a realistic budget for the park. Four different options were considered but only one option offered cost effective and sustainable way to deliver the Masterplan, ten year maintenance and management plan and adhere to the HLF conditions. It also has the potential to deliver a more sustainable park in the long term, with a growing 'sink' fund and dedicated pool of managed volunteers with which to 'Grow our park together'.

The new staffing proposal for the park will be to ring fence the parks current revenue budget (-20%), which includes all current staffing including an apprentice, materials budget, management charges and overheads, and use this to develop a dedicated park team led by an experienced Park Manager and Assistant Park Manager, the Park Manager post will help deliver the HLF Delivery stage and will be funded in the first five years by HLF.

The park team would be a standalone team centring on a highly experienced and qualified core, which would include a Park Manager, Assistant Park Manager, seasonal post(s) (who would undertake basic gardening, training/teaching and co-ordinating volunteers) and up to three park and garden apprentices (one being funded by Kilmahew St Peters, which will allow a partnership to develop across the two sites). The team would work alongside a variety of community groups, schools and stakeholders to manage and develop the park. Links with the current Amenity Supervisor and their team would be maintained

**Figure 9: Hermitage Park staff Organogram**



### Seasonal Posts

The role of the seasonal posts will be to provide both hands-on horticulture and an element of horticultural training and development. The training aspect is an important part of the HLF Delivery phase, longer term financial sustainability of the park and will help deliver part of the parks activity plan.



A potential partnership to develop a shared volunteer co-ordinator between a number of different external organisations (Argyll & the Isles Coast and Countryside Trust, Kilmahew and other partners - to be confirmed) who have similar needs is being considered. As part of this proposal £5,000 allocated to the Seasonal Volunteer Co-ordinator role would be used to fund this. At this early stage no internal discussions have taken place to approve such a use of funds.

### 5.2.2 Budget

The park masterplan has been developed in part to help reduce the management and maintenance burden of the park. Staffing provision for the park has been based on working within an affordable budget (which will be ring-fenced for the park), delivering the masterplan, activity plan and ten year management and maintenance plan, which must meet and achieve Green Flag Standards and retain this for a minimum of 10 years in line with HLF criteria for the HLF stage two application.

The current revenue budget for the park is £100,741. The proposed revenue budget for the park has been set at £80,593 and equates to a 20% cut of the current budget in line with proposed service choice cuts for Amenity Service. The budget excludes any inflationary increases but has been ring fenced.

<b>Proposed annual staffing Costs</b>	<b>£71,536</b> (Costs include National Insurance and Superannuation)
<b>Proposed annual materials budget</b>	<b>£9,057</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>80,593</b>

The Park Manager post is fully funded by HLF for the five year Delivery phase.

### Sink/endowment fund

The Park Manager will work closely with FoHPA/Users Group to develop a sink fund, managed by the FoHPA. The sink fund will be developed to help future repair and development costs of the park. A minute of agreement will be prepared to manage and monitor the fund. Clarity as to what income can be diverted into this fund will be required.

## 6. How will we know we have arrived?



*Figure 10: Looking south from Memorial Garden gates*

### 6.1 Measuring our success

This section sets out how the Action Plan, set out in section 3A will be monitored, updated and reviewed. It also includes a number of indicators that will help us to measure our success towards improving the park and achieving more favourable results under the Green Flag criteria.

This management plan as a whole will be reviewed annually - any completed actions will be recorded and revised / new actions inserted. The amendment sheet at the front of the plan will be used to record this. Part 2- WHERE DO WE WANT TO GET TO? Will also require to be reviewed on a regular basis. The action plan will be monitored quarterly and progress reported to the Amenity Services management group. The entire Plan will be reviewed in 2021.

A number of indicators are listed below. Many of these refer to information that is not currently recorded and as such, it is not possible to establish targets as yet. It is expected that targets will be set in 2018.

In addition, if successful under the HLF Parks For People programme we will be required to undertake monitoring on the following outcomes:

**Outcomes for heritage** i.e. the heritage will be:

- better managed
- in better condition
- better interpreted and explained
- identified / recorded

**Outcomes for people** i.e. people will have:

- developed skills
- learnt about heritage
- changed their attitudes and/or behaviour
- had an enjoyable experience
- volunteered time

**Outcomes for communities'** i.e.

- environmental impacts will be reduced
- more people and a wider range of people will have engaged with heritage
- your local area/community will be a better place to live, work or visit
- your local economy will be boosted
- your organisation will be more resilient

Baseline information will be collected, where not currently available and will then be updated on an annual basis.

#### **A welcoming place**

- Do people feel welcome and safe
- Increase in user satisfaction from annual user survey (Outcome Development Plan Indicator)
- Reduction in complaints
- Increase in park awareness

#### **Healthy, safe and secure**

- Reduction in number of recorded incidents
- Improved perceptions of safety from annual user surveys
- Visitors using the park later / more frequently

#### **Clean and well-maintained**

- Increase in user satisfaction from annual user survey (Outcome Development Plan Indicator)
- Reduction in complaints

#### **Sustainability**

- Reduction in amount of pesticides/ herbicides used
- Reduction in amount of energy used
- Development of the Environmental Plan

#### **Conservation and heritage**

- Reduction in invasive species
- Increase in flora and fauna (biodiversity)
- Increase in knowledge of park history and heritage

#### **Community involvement**

- Number of events held by community groups / others
- Number of people attending events
- Number of volunteer activities
- Number of schools/ community groups active in the park
- Learning of new skills

#### **Marketing**

- Number of website hits
- Number of press articles generated

#### **Management**

- Performance against improvement plan
- Annual self-assessment Green Flag audit score (Outcome Development Plan Indicator)
- Increase in income
- Amount of external funding secured

## 7. Annual Management and Maintenance



*Figure 11: Memorial Garden south elevation and herbaceous border*

### 7.1 Annual Management & Maintenance Schedule (see Appendix 1)

The objectives of the Management and Maintenance operations are to ensure an attractive, tidy and safe environment such that visitors will enjoy coming to the park year round.

The schedule sets out maintenance operations for all the park elements i.e:

- hard landscape elements
- soft landscape elements
- structures, buildings, walls, fences etc
- park furniture (benches, bins, bridges, bike stands)
- lighting
- water features
- general park cleanliness (litter collection, litter picking, leaf collection)

### 7.2 Hard Landscape Operation Standards

The overarching objective is to maintain clean, even, consistent surfaces for use by all park visitors.

Hard surface areas should be kept free from the following:

- litter, including autumn / winter leaves
- dust and accumulated grit
- stains e.g. oil, paint
- graffiti
- weeds, moss and algae
- standing water
- snow and ice in winter
- gullies cleared of leaves and grit

Table 4 can be used as a checklist for inspection and maintenance of hard areas. Defects should be reported and dealt with as they arise.

**Table 5: Hard Landscape Maintenance Operations**

Maintenance Operation	
Litter and leaves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All hard surfaced areas should be kept clean of litter on a weekly basis</li> <li>• All hard surfaced areas should be cleared of leaves during the autumn / winter on a monthly basis</li> </ul>
Sweeping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sweeping should be undertaken daily around the pavilion and weekly for the remainder of the park to remove accumulation of dust and grit</li> </ul>
Stain removal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any stains to bitumen or stone/slab paving should be removed within 5 days of being reported</li> <li>• Chemicals, detergents and oil-based materials should be used sparingly and not hosed in to planted areas, down drains or in to watercourse/water bodies but suctioned by a vacuum cleaner</li> <li>• Chemicals should only be used by a competent operator</li> </ul>
Graffiti removal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete removal of abusive or obscene graffiti should be removed within 24 hours of being reported and within 5 days for other forms of graffiti</li> <li>• Chemicals, detergents and oil-based materials should be used sparingly and not hosed in to planted areas, down drains or in to watercourse/water bodies but suctioned by a vacuum cleaner</li> <li>• Chemicals should only be used by a competent operator or under supervision</li> </ul>
Weed and moss growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weed and moss growth should not exceed 1% of paved areas and 20% of joints</li> <li>• A programme of weed killing for path finishes, kerb and fence lines should be put in place to ensure effective control all year</li> <li>• Treat weeds with a contact or residual herbicide as required</li> <li>• Remove weeds from joints and along kerb edges by raking out</li> </ul>
Standing water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Puddles of water should not be allowed to stand for extended periods</li> <li>• Depressions in hard surfaces should be repaired where possible</li> </ul>
Snow and ice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Snow and ice should be treated as a priority to the primary path network to ensure safe routes through the park</li> <li>• Salt should be spread mechanically but not used in close proximity to trees and other plants</li> <li>• Salt will not be stored on site, but brought in from the depot as required</li> </ul>
Gullies / drains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surface water drains, channels, gullies, traps, outlets and grids should be kept clear of accumulated grit, leaves, grass and weeds</li> <li>• Gulleys and drainage channels should be cleaned out monthly in gravel areas and twice a year (autumn / winter) elsewhere</li> </ul>
Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where a risk of slipping or tripping exists, a warning notice should be installed and repairs effected within 5 days</li> <li>• All stone / slab paving should be maintained to original levels and falls</li> <li>• Stone / slab paving – not more than 10% broken</li> <li>• Gravel paths – rake and roll when wet to maintain designed levels</li> </ul>
Repairs to paths	<u>Bitumen surfaces</u>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• where the surface becomes uneven or there is a drainage problem, patch or replace to falls</li> <li>• repair cracking and frost damaged areas by raking out and replacing</li> <li>• Potholes to be cut back to sound material, cut vertically, painted with bitumen emulsion and repaired to match original specification</li> </ul> <p><u>Gravel/hoggin surfaces</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Repair by loosening, raking and making up to match original specification to appropriate levels and falls. Roll to complete</li> </ul> <p><u>Type 1 to car park</u></p> <p>Top up twice a year to ensure levels are maintained</p> <p><u>Kerbs / Edges</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loose kerbs / edges – reinstall to appropriate line and level</li> <li>• Broken kerbs / edges – replace to appropriate line and level</li> </ul>
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### 7.3 Soft Landscape Operation Standards

The aim is to ensure a visually attractive park, with good seasonal interest and variety and trees and shrubs maintained to a high standard using the latest horticulture best practice. The park as whole will be managed to display a seasonal succession of interest, although this does not need to apply to every bed or border.

In addition, the maintenance and management will ensure that the park retains and develops its character and ‘sense of place’.

Soft landscape maintenance will include the following:

- General grass care (cutting, edging, that removal, firming, aeration)
- Lawn games grass care
- Wildflower / native grass edge to woodland areas
- Control of weeds and disease
- Application of fertilizers
- Pruning / dead heading
- Bed Maintenance (Rockeries, Shrubs, Rosebeds, Herbaceous, Seasonal bedding)
- Hedge management
- Tree management
- Plant replacements

Table 5 (below) can be used as a checklist for inspection and maintenance of soft landscape areas. The majority of actions will be applicable to the whole park, but where required will identify specific actions for particular locations. Defects should be reported and dealt with as they arise.

#### Plantings

Detailed planting proposals will be developed as part of the next stage of the project however a number of broad principles will be applied to the future plantings within the set out below:-

- Any plant design will take into account the available resources to manage and maintain it in the future.
- The collection will build upon the current list where possible increasing the interest to show and demonstrate what can be grown within the locality
- Additional native and nectar rich plants will be added to the park to improve the biodiversity of the park.

- The plant collection should consider the high level of Award of Garden Merit planting already within the park.
- Specific areas of plants will be grown to help maintain a particular character, enhance a feature, provide additional interest and ideas, etc. For example the Japanese garden, pool and bog garden, The Proposed war memorial and the development of a peace garden (utilising all white flowers).
- Drawing upon the Environmental Impact report for Hermitage Park a reduction in the use of bedding plants will be undertaken and careful consideration of new planting will be guided by the report. For example the reduction of cut grassed areas or change in management to develop naturalised plantings attractive to both visitor and insects.
- The Demonstration garden will develop a vertical orchard and an A to Z of edible plants, but must only be developed if sustainable. If there is insufficient labour beds can be put down to 'green manure' crops.
- Beds and borders will be developed in ways to reduce maintenance but still provide interest, for example densely planted, low maintenance prairie style plantings, direct sown annual meadow crops, etc.

**Table 6: Soft Landscape Maintenance Operations**

Maintenance Operation	
Grass care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Before cutting remove all surface debris</li> <li>• General grass areas to be maintained at 15-25mm</li> <li>• Lawn games areas to be maintained at 10-20mm</li> <li>• All arisings to be lifted, removed and taken for composting</li> <li>• Lightly roll lawn games area after frost to re-firm</li> <li>• Remove leaves and other debris in autumn / winter</li> <li>• Brush or switch lawn games area when wet</li> <li>• Strim boundaries or other areas where it is not practical to cut with a mower</li> <li>• Edge boundaries at the same time as cutting</li> <li>• Carry out light de-thatching as required using a vertical mower</li> <li>• Scarify annually, penetrating surface to a depth of 5mm</li> <li>• Roll lightly when the soil is moist before start of main growing season</li> <li>• Aerate annually when the ground is moist to a depth of 100mm</li> <li>• Top dress annually</li> </ul>
Wildflower / native grass	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strim once annually in late autumn</li> <li>• Leave arisings for 2 weeks to allow any seed to drop through</li> <li>• Collect up arisings and take to recycling</li> </ul>
Control of weeds & disease	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grassed areas - examine for weeds, moss, disease and insect pests and take measures to control</li> <li>• Apply broad leaved weed killer / spot treat weeds as required</li> <li>• Shrub areas – remove weeds by hand or hoe</li> </ul>
Application of fertiliser	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grassed areas – Generally do not apply fertilisers</li> <li>• Lawn games area – apply fertiliser annually in spring to ensure grass can withstand intense use</li> <li>• Shrub areas – no requirement to apply fertiliser additional nutrients should be added through a compost mulch</li> </ul>
Pruning / shrub care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prune annually according to species</li> <li>• Dead head perennials after flowers have gone over</li> </ul>

Maintenance Operation	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All arisings to be taken for composting</li> <li>• Lift and divide where plants have spread beyond the desired design</li> </ul>
Bed Maintenance	<p><u>Rockeries</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weed</li> <li>• Fork over</li> <li>• Prune and trim plants</li> </ul> <p><u>Shrubs</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weed</li> <li>• Fork over</li> <li>• Prune and trim plants</li> </ul> <p><u>Rosebeds</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weed</li> <li>• Fork over</li> <li>• Prune and trim roses</li> <li>• Apply fertilizer</li> <li>• Deadhead</li> </ul> <p><u>Herbaceous</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weed</li> <li>• Fork over</li> <li>• Prune and trim plants</li> <li>• Remove epicormic growth</li> </ul> <p><u>Seasonal Bedding</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plant out in spring/summer</li> <li>• Plant out in autumn/spring</li> <li>• Hoe and weed bed</li> </ul>
Hedge management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cut annually according to species and to achieve intended height and shape</li> <li>• All arisings to be taken for composting</li> <li>• Gap up with appropriate species between October and March</li> </ul>
Tree management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inspect annually for any disease or damage</li> <li>• Remove any accessible dead, damaged dangerous limbs</li> <li>• Where more specialist or inaccessible work is required, bring in arboriculturist</li> <li>• Prune / crown raise to suit species and as appropriate to keep character of tree and maintain views where required through the park</li> <li>• Remove epicormic / basal growth</li> <li>• When planting new trees use double stake arrangement to secure and remove at end of 4<sup>th</sup> growing season</li> </ul>
Plant replacements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake an annual inspection of the park plants and prepare schedule of replacements</li> <li>• Undertake any required replacements during standard planting season i.e. beginning of October through to end of March</li> </ul>

#### 7.4 Water Operation Standards

The various water features within the park will need to be maintained to ensure they continue to be visually attractive. The natural water features; Milligs Burn, water gardens and ponds will need



regular inspection of the associated planting to ensure that it does not become overgrown and encroach too much into the water.

The Hermit’s Well is to be kept clean and attractive for visitors and the fountains will be required to be maintained regularly to ensure that they continue to function. All the water bodies, but particularly the fountains will require checks on water quality to meet public health requirements

Maintenance operations for the water features will include the following:

- Inspection of defects
- Vegetation management
- Water quality testing and fountain repair

Table 6 are the items that actions required annually, or more frequently if necessary, to ensure the quality and continuing aesthetic appeal of all of the water features.

**Table 7: Water Feature Operations**

Maintenance Operation	
Inspection of defects	<p><u>Ponds</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check water levels to ensure no puncturing of liners has occurred. If puncturing has occurred, all pond plants will require to be carefully lifted and placed to one side, pond soil placed to one side and liner removed and replaced</li> <li>• Check that liner is not exposed. Where necessary regrade soil, gravel or pebbles to completely cover liner</li> <li>• Hard edge to large pond – check intact and make good any damaged copings</li> </ul> <p><u>Milligs Burn</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inspect stone retaining walls and edges and make good as required</li> <li>• Inspect embankments for erosion and repair as necessary using suitable natural design solutions</li> </ul> <p><u>Water Gardens</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is unlikely that defects will occur as these are entirely of natural/planted design, but they will require vegetation management and water quality testing</li> </ul> <p><u>Fountains</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check all pumps, filters, pipework on a monthly basis and replace any damaged components</li> <li>• Filters will require to be replaced quarterly</li> </ul> <p><u>Hermits Well</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This item will be covered under the maintenance for buildings, structures, etc</li> </ul>
Vegetation Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Removal of excessive growth, whether marginal or aquatics is to take place in late autumn / early winter to avoid loss or injury to aquatic wildlife i.e. tadpoles, damselfly and dragonfly emerging nymphs, hibernating frogs</li> <li>• Carefully remove build-up of any surface pond weed throughout the summer avoiding loss or injury to tadpoles etc</li> <li>• Should algal bloom occur, take advice on treatment. Where possible use natural solution e.g. barley bales rather than chemicals</li> </ul>
Water quality testing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water quality testing for the fountains will be required monthly to</li> </ul>

Maintenance Operation	
and fountain repairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensure public health and safety</li> <li>If required flush and clean pipe and pumpwork and replace filters</li> <li>Replace any damaged components as and when required</li> </ul>

## 7.5 Buildings, structures, features etc Operation Standards

The objectives of the operations of maintenance for the buildings, park structures (including play equipment, interpretation elements, signage, seating, park furniture, lighting, walls and fences) is to:

- ensure that the structure / item fulfils the functions for which it is provided
- extend the life of the structure / item
- maintain in a safe condition
- keep clean and free of graffiti and clear of vegetative growth

The operations that will need to undertaken to ensure the above, include the following:

- Pavilion inspection and repairs
- Memorial Garden inspection and repairs (walls, gates, memorial and pool)
- Hermit's Well inspection and repairs
- Signage inspection and repairs
- Park furniture inspection and repairs (benches, bins, bike racks, buggy shelter)
- Interpretation elements inspection and repairs
- Play Equipment inspection and repairs

Table 7 indicates the actions required to keep all the buildings and structures in the park in good operating condition and safe for the public.

**Table 8: Park Structures Operations**

Maintenance Operation	
Pavilion inspection and repairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On completion of the new pavilion set up an inspection programme to cover all repair aspects of the building i.e. gutters, roofs, windows, shutters, exterior finishes</li> <li>• Repair and replace as required</li> <li>• Remove all façade staining and graffiti by washing down with water and a suitable detergent. Graffiti is to be removed immediately</li> <li>• Keep all external mats, paths and paving clean of litter, dust and dirt on a daily basis</li> <li>• Set out daily internal cleaning activities to ensure pavilion is kept clean, tidy and welcoming e.g. empty bins, clean toilets, sweep and wash floors</li> <li>• Annually clean any upholstered furniture, light fittings, rugs and polish any hardwood floors</li> <li>• Replace broken and chipped crockery as required</li> <li>• Set up inspection programme for electrical, plumbing and carpentry items</li> </ul>
Memorial Garden inspection and repairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Following the initial remedial works to repair the Memorial Garden walls and gates as set out in the War Memorial Conservation Plan, inspect annually to check condition of stone work, pointing and gate hinges</li> <li>• Repair using sympathetic materials and working practices as required</li> <li>• Keep stonework clean of stains and graffiti by removing with water</li> </ul>

Maintenance Operation	
	<p>and suitable detergent</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annually check reflective pool. Drain down and clean stone work to remove any build-up of silt and Verdigris</li> <li>• Check annually to ensure gates are hanging correctly. Oil, ease and relevel as required</li> </ul>
Hermit's Well inspection and repairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Following the initial remedial works to repair the Hermit's Well inspect annually to check condition of pointing and stone work</li> <li>• Repair using sympathetic materials and working practices as required</li> <li>• Keep stonework clean of stains and graffiti by removing with water and suitable detergent that is appropriate for use by watercourses</li> </ul>
Signage inspection and repairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Replace broken signs as soon as is possible</li> <li>• Regularly wash and clean to remove build-up of dirt and Verdigris using a water and mild detergent (ensure detergents do not enter water courses)</li> <li>• Annually review any signs and make sure they are still relevant and up to date. If park elements have been relocated or removed, signs may require to be renewed to reflect these changes</li> </ul>
Park furniture inspection and repairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Replace broken bins and seats, other park furniture as soon as possible or if it is in a dangerous condition remove until a replacement is available</li> <li>• All park furniture should be inspected annually during winter, so that repairs and general refurbishment can be done at a time that will cause least inconvenience to the public</li> <li>• Regularly wash and clean to remove build-up of dirt and Verdigris using a water and mild detergent (ensure detergents do not enter water courses)</li> </ul>
Interpretation inspection and repairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Much of the interpretation elements have been covered under other headings i.e. Hermit's Well, Signage, Mill Lade bulb planting (soft landscape elements)</li> <li>• Generally undertake monthly checks to ensure interpretation elements have not been damaged or defaced. Carry out any repairs as required</li> <li>• Keep interpretation elements clean and free from rubbish and graffiti</li> </ul>
Play equipment inspection and repairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Play equipment must be maintained to ensure it is safe for use</li> <li>• Undertake regular checks and effect repairs as soon as is possible</li> <li>• Should damage mean equipment is unsafe, clearly identify that the piece of equipment is not for use until further notice</li> <li>• Generally keep play equipment clean of dust, dirt, graffiti and verdigris build-up through regularly cleaning by washing with water and suitable detergent</li> <li>• Annually replace any damaged lawn games items to ensure full sets of game equipment</li> <li>• Repaint/restain to keep equipment looking fresh and vibrant on an annual basis</li> </ul>

## 7.6 Grounds Inspection Checklists

There should be a hierarchy of inspections:

- Forward –planning inspections carried out by managerial staff twice a year in order to plan development, staff and budgets
- Routine casual inspections carried out weekly by supervisory staff with the object of reporting the success or otherwise of management objectives
- Informal inspections carried out by maintenance staff who should be trained to note and report all matters necessary to report to management

In addition, regular formal written inspections need to be carried out although frequency depends on the element and the season. During the growing season regular recorded inspections of all growing elements except trees should be carried out every month. Tree inspections should be undertaken twice a year, once when trees are in leaf and once when (deciduous) trees have no foliage. Twice annual recorded inspections of all hard landscaping features and furniture must be undertaken by suitably qualified staff.

## 7.7 Monitoring and Plan Review

The management plan should be continually reviewed, updated and rewritten.

A formal annual review of the management and maintenance regimes applying in Hermitage Park will be undertaken by managers.

A review by management of objectives and outcome is scheduled in year 2 (2018). The purpose is to resolve problems with both the specification and delivery of the MMP. Subsequent reviews are planned for Years 4, 7 and 10.

If required, the written management plan itself will be updated on a five year cycle, either by the Operations Manager or by an appointed staff member of staff.

In addition to major reviews, site inspections by a senior manager will be carried out twice a year. The purpose is both to monitor performance and to assist with forward planning.

The desired cycle is to Plan – Operate – Monitor – Review – Plan.

- Internally: deficiencies in performance will be addressed by altering the management and/or maintenance regime in order to achieve the necessary improvement.
- Externally: the performance specification may also be regarded as a ‘contract’ for delivery of an objectively measurable standard of management and maintenance between the local authority and the community of users. To this end, the performance specification can be used by external bodies, such as user or internet groups, to monitor the performance of the local authority and by the HLF, together with the review of the MMP at year 5 and year 10, to monitor contract compliance.

Annual satisfaction of the criteria required in order to achieve a Green Flag Award will serve as an additional check on maintenance standard in the Park.